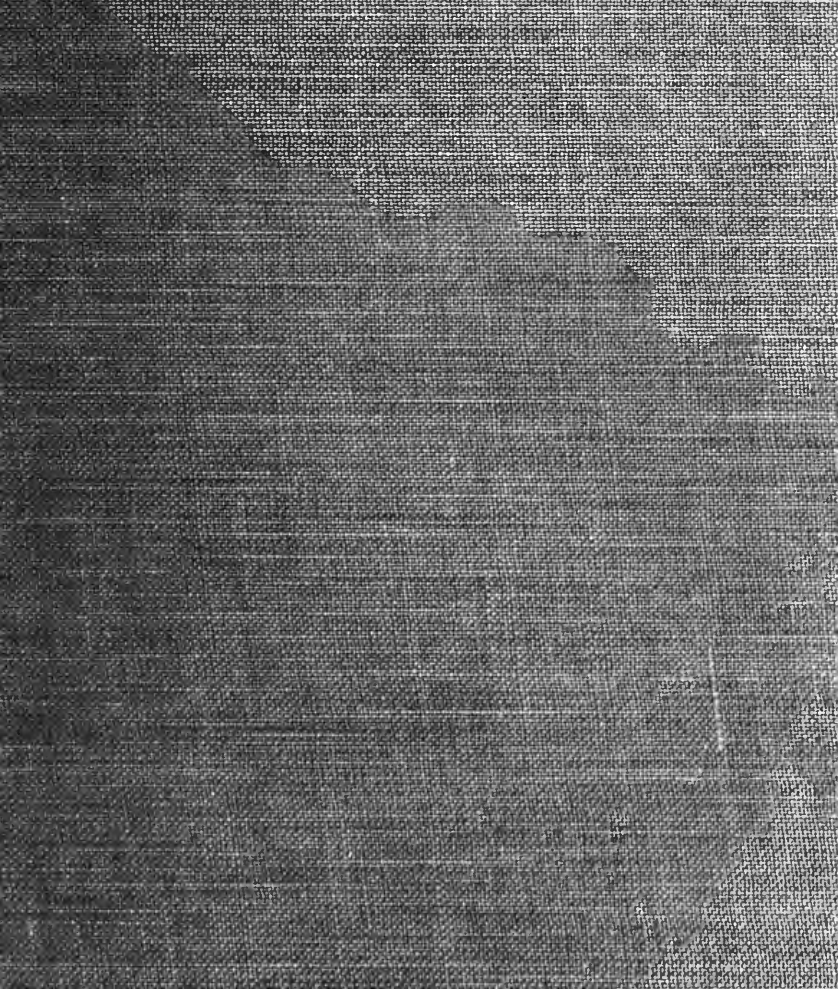


THE SPIRIT ON
THE LINKS
BY HENRY LEACH





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THE SPIRIT OF THE LINKS

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BY

HENRY LEACH

GREAT GOLF, WHAT POWERFUL CHARM IS IN THY NAME !
WHAT CUNNING WITCHCRAFT IN THY FASCINATING GAME !

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THE SPIRIT OF THE LINKS

SPRING

I

TO discover the secret of its wonderful charm is not the least of the problems of golf. It is a game that encourages the reflective and philosophical mind to close investigation, and so it is not enough for the worthy player that he should take the things that he sees and feels for granted, with no questions concerning the mystic influences that seem constantly to brood over the links, and the people who are of them. Each day as we go forward to the game, and in particular if it marks the beginning of a special period of play, we feel these influences strong, and it may happen that for a moment we wonder again as to their cause and their origin.

Many minds have made great efforts towards the discovery of this secret, but the fruits thereof have not been satisfying. Golf is not like other games which stir up great enthusiasms in their players. Long spells of failure or of ambition thwarted often kill

the passion that has fed the energy of the players of these games ; but that is not the case with golf, and golf almost alone. Nor does a surfeit of play lessen the desire for it as it does in the case of other field sports, which need close seasons for their healthiness. When one day's golf is over, the thought is of the next that will succeed it, and the hope already goes forward to anticipation of the superior delights that may be in store. And it makes the same appeal to all persons of all classes who once attach themselves to it, and it has been found that the golf impulses are as strong in the men of other races and of other colours as they are in the British who have cultivated the game. This universality, the constant enthusiasm, the unweariedness of the golfer, and the intense ardour that distinguishes him from the players of other games, suggest to us that some strong emotion of the human mind is touched by golf in some peculiar way, that its principles and the conditions of its play make a special appeal to some elementary feature of simple human nature ; for it is the appeal to these primitive instincts that is always the strongest, the most overpowering.

Upon this line of investigation we come upon a clue that leads us to a more satisfactory idea as to the secret than any other which has been suggested. The strongly humanising tendencies of the game are evident to all, and admitted. No cloak of convention can be worn over the manners and thoughts of the player ; he is the simple man. And what are the subtle features of the primitive instincts that are awakened in him so constantly, at almost every stroke, in every round, and on every day ? It is sometimes difficult to seize upon them, floating in a

vagueness as they do, but it does seem that all the strong emotions of the golfer combining to make up his grand devotion to the game, are clustered round the simple human instinct, most human and most potent of all, the instinct of Hope. It is this hope that leads the golfer on through all his troubles and disappointments, and it still urges him forward when he has already ascended to a great delight. It is a hope that will never permit complete satisfaction. This simple formula that the mystic charm of golf is hope, will explain all the emotions that rise up in the golfer in the course of a year of play. Take him from the first tee to the end of his game. It is the fresh morning, and the ardour of the golfer is warm within him, and he has a yearning and a high hope for a great day's sport. Here, on the teeing ground, he is animated by a great desire to play the first hole as well as ever before, and to drive a clean far ball that shall speak well of his skill and make good augury for the strokes that are to come. If he succeeds his hope but increases. Does he play the tee shot badly, and his hopes go forward to a great recovery with the second shot of the game. If that should fail, vexatiously, there may still be the chance of a wonderful approach, and though the approach be not so wonderful, is there not the possibility that the gods may be so kind as to steer a very long putt into the hole? These are exactly the alternating sentiments; and if the fulfilment of the hope be denied to the last putt, and the hole be lost, at the second tee there is hope again that the indifferent start will be succeeded by a flash of brilliance as shall restore the position and the complete equanimity of the player.

And so it is from shot to shot and from hole to hole all the way round the course, and "*Spero meliora*" is the eternal motto, even though the present state be happy. If the whole round be weak and the result of it adverse, there is the hope of the afternoon; and at the end of the day the unfortunate golfer, moved almost to despair by his failures, soon recovers again that optimism which is his constant succour, and then his hopes are of the morrow. Does he not know now what it was that he was "doing wrong," the golfing sin that he committed all the day? To-morrow the fault shall be corrected, and the swings that are made in after-hours now give fair promise of a great change. A well-prepared heart has the golfer, the like of which, as Horace says, hopes in the worst fortune, and in prosperity fears a change in the chances. Give it that the man has golfed above his true ability, and how he does fear that the next game may put him back again; but here again there is buoyant hope in evidence, and when the evening is filled with the exaltation of it, how sweet it is to wander a little over the resting, deserted links and mark the places where balls were pitched, and the lines along which fine putts were made, and the points to which play shall be directed when the next round is in the making, perhaps the best of all.

So it is hope and hope all the way through the golfer's life, and it is the most joyous, the most uplifting of all the instincts, and the most intensely human, and that which is given to man alone. It is because golf strikes always this chord in his nature that it makes the strong appeal to him. There is no other game or sport that permits him to hope

through failure in the same way, that leads him on, coaxes him, cajoles him, even fools him. And this drama of the emotions of the individual is played always in the most perfect setting for such a simple human play—the sea and green fields and plain earth, and the simplest tools to move a little white ball, not along marked lines or within narrow limits or in protected arenas, but anywhere along that green grass, over the hills and through the valleys and across the streams and rushing rivers, while the wind blows now this way and then that, and the rain pours. All the time the golfer pursues the little ball, alone with plain nature and his human adversary. Here he is released from all the conventionalities of mind that hold him in his other doings in this complicated civilisation. The primitive instincts are in command; they have the fields and the sea for harmony in the scene, and the golfer is away from all the intricacies of the twentieth century, and is the simple man and the hopeful man.

That is a fair creed concerning the command of golf, and we may reject the theory that indomitable, persevering mankind finds the fascination of the game merely in the failures and irritations that it brings and in the desire to overcome them. The activity of that instinct of hope is the mystic charm, and surely it is to the credit of a game that it should teach the man to look forward with courage and cheerfulness, and to be always something of an optimist, and the more of it the better for his game. These things lead to the making of a good man as well as a good golfer.

II

Men of other races, whose skins are not white, are afoot with this game. Black men are playing; yellow men are becoming expert; red men have achieved great skill. A few years since a golfer traveller found his way to the Blackfeet Reservation in Montana, and he saw the wild Red Indian at golf, and thought that it suited him better than his old game of lacrosse. Spotted Horse drove off along the prairie—a plain prairie with only a few shrubs about—and he followed and played the ball for a couple of miles to the turn, and then played it back. There were no holes; the game was to play the course in the fewest strokes. Here, indeed, is the primitive golf. Some of the Indians are said to have made fine drives—as good as the best that white men do—and this was all the more remarkable inasmuch as it is the Red Indians' pretty custom to yell and howl in a frightful chorus while one of their number is addressing the ball preparatory to making his stroke. So it does not seem easy to put the red men off.

Golf, indeed, is the one world game; it is in essence that very simple sport which so easily and certainly spreads over the planet. Everywhere the British are pioneers, and they are by far the more numerous players; but native proselytes are coming in fast in almost every quarter of the globe, so now it may fairly be said that no other game is being played everywhere by so many different sorts of people as this game of ours. Sit on a magic carpet and be transported

to any place, and there, somewhere about you, will be a golf course.

I have lately had some talk with men from the East, who tell of the good game that half-naked tribesmen, standing and walking in bare feet, have learned to play; and, moreover, of the beautiful clubs, most exquisitely finished and sometimes inlaid with ivory and fancy woods, that they have made. I am assured that the "professional champion of Ceylon" is a Cingalese caddie who holds the record for the Ridgeway course, made when he was playing against a British golfer of thoroughly good class. The Japanese are beginning to play, and good judges have been led to express fears that their qualities and temperaments will bring them to a higher state of perfection in the short game than has ever been attained before, and which will surely threaten the supremacy of the white man. Golfing at Kobe is a peculiar experience. The course is at Rokkosan, on the top of a high mountain, and you must therefore climb the mountain before you can golf on the course. You go by rickshaw to the foot of the Cascade Valley, and are then carried up the mountain slope by coolies for an hour and a half, when the tees and the bunkers come into view. Those who play there hold that the view from this course is the finest from any, though it can hardly be better than that from the course on the top of Senchal Hill at Darjeeling, for from here there is Kingenjunga, 28,000 feet high, to be seen, and from the summit of Tiger Hill, overlooking the course, there is Mount Everest itself in view.

And there is golf in China too, six clubs for it. We had no sooner come to the conclusion and

officially announced some years ago that Wei-hai-wei was a very desirable resort, than the golf club was duly established there. In these days the building prospector first settles upon his golf course, and advertises it, and then he builds his houses round about; and in the same way it is realised that it is the proper thing when seeking to make a new centre of Europeans abroad to start with a golf course. I have been with men on shipboard who, having golfed on the queer course of Tangier, have then speculated unceasingly in the smoke-room as we sailed along the smooth waters of the West African coast about the kind of golf that would be vouchsafed to them on reaching the Canary Islands. Some time since I had a letter from a highly-placed British official at Chinkiang on the Yangtse River, and he told me how they had just begun to play the game out there on a new course which was covered with crater-like excrescences. These are Chinese graves, and they are said to make most excellent hazards. There are pig-tailed fellows for caddies, and it was carefully ascertained that no Chinese sentiment is injured in the matter.

There are golf clubs in all the States of Europe. There are very many in France, and there are more each year, and it is remarkable that the Frenchman is now establishing them for his exclusive use. At Boulogne the Englishman and his friends of France golf together on a course where some of the hazards were the earthworks of Napoleon's camp—the camp that held the Grand Army that lay in readiness for the invasion of Britain. What irony is here—that the British golfer should play over the Emperor's camp! The Master-General must himself

have walked many times over the lines of our tee shots, and the shadow of the monument that he built to commemorate his invasion of Albion, almost lies across the course from which Albion herself, uninvaded, may be seen. And the Mayor of Boulogne gives prizes to the British golfers who make the best golf on Napoleon's camp. I come to realise the depth of the meaning of the lines cut into a marble tablet that I saw on the side of a staircase in the Museum at Boulogne one day—"France and England have more good sense than all the world," and those lines were put on the stone more than sixty years ago.

France is fair and free, but the game is played in Europe where the times and conditions are not at all the same. There is golf in Russia, and to it there was added a new course but recently. At the first thought it seems a little odd that such a peaceful game should be played in holy and revolutionary Russia even by Britishers. They have had two courses in Russia for a long time past—one near Moscow and the other at Mourino, a small village a few versts out from St. Petersburg. The men who play here are of a hardy, determined strain, fine men for pioneers. To get their golf they have to drive thirteen miles out from the capital over bad roads; and in order to obtain a fair amount of satisfaction from their game they have to returf their putting greens almost every year, owing to the extreme sandiness of the soil. The Kaiser is encouraging the game in Germany, and has given prizes for it; there are eight clubs in Italy; and others in Austria, Holland, Belgium, and all the rest. The game has flourished for twelve years past in the dominions of

the Sultan of Turkey, that is to say at Bagdad, and the golfers there are pleased to tell you that their course is no miniature affair as are so many at the outposts of the empire of St. Andrews, but that it consists of full eighteen holes, and that, in the desert, they are very sporting indeed.

It goes without saying that the game flourishes greatly in all the Colonies. In Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and the others there are little booms of golf in progress, each of its own kind. At Pretoria and at many places at the Cape the greens consist of diamondiferous gravel, smooth and sparkling, and the first local rule of the Kimberley Club startles the newly-arrived golfer from the homeland, for it tells him that "It shall be lawful for a player to level the ground on the putting green in any manner he pleases." In India there are some forty flourishing clubs, and that at Calcutta, with its five hundred members and two courses of nine holes each, having been established for nearly eighty years, takes rank as one of the premier clubs of the world. There is the Aden Club in Arabia, the Royal Bangkok in Siam, where an old and very imposing Siamese temple does duty for clubhouse, and others all over Asia, as one might almost say. There are many golf clubs in the Argentine Republic and the other South American States. The Sandwich Islands are full of the game, for there are five clubs there. In the East Indies there are three, and in the West Indies there are eight. Wherever the Britisher goes he leaves his trail of golf behind him. There is a story of Captain Adair holding a golf competition in his camp when pitched on one of the passes leading into Thibet, at a height of sixteen thousand

feet above the sea-level. I have no information about the game having been played in the North Polar regions; but I am told that when the recent British Antarctic Expedition was made in the *Discovery*, the Commander, Captain Scott, who is a keen golfer, took some clubs down there with him, and in some leisure moments "had a knock," by way of reminding him of the old links at home, and of seeing what the sensation of South Polar golf was like. It is said that forged iron has a peculiarly cold and numbing touch in the frozen south.

It is the same game everywhere, and the law is always taken from Fifeshire; but the conditions and makeshifts are sometimes peculiar. We have said how at the Cape they putt on gritty earth that smacks of diamonds, how in China there are graves for bunkers, and how across the Channel, Napoleon's trenches serve for the same purpose. Boulogne, after all, is only in the nature of a corollary to our courses at Walton Heath and Huntercombe, for hereabouts the golfers play where the legions of mighty Cæsar were encamped, and the stables and the kitchens that Cæsar made, huge pits deep in the earth, are in the line of play, and things are so arranged that they constitute fine traps for erring balls, and offer remunerative opportunities for skill with iron clubs in playing out of them. And yet, if one must play bad shots, it is well that they should be played in the direction in which Cæsar dug, for these pits were made so long ago and are so deep that they are often beautifully turfed with soft springy stuff, which anywhere except in a pit would be a delight to play from, being so congenial to one's iron. We must applaud the Romans in this matter. It is nearly a

pleasure to go into their kitchens and stables; they were made so long ago and they are so green and nice. There is golf at Old Calabar on the West Coast of Africa, and there the putting "greens" are made of fine coal dust. So they are "blacks." At Mexico and many other places they are merely "browns." In Egypt, where there is much golf, they are often made of rolled and baked Nile mud.

It is not necessary to say that there is nearly as much golf played in America as there is in Britain, and that the time may possibly come when there will be more. But it is not generally appreciated on what old-established foundations American golf is played. The game has traditions in America now, even as in Britain. In the archives of American golf there is still preserved a document which shows how little of a new thing is the game in the United States. It is an invitation, reading as follows: "Golf Club Ball.—The honour of Miss Eliza Johnston's company is requested to a ball, to be given by the members of the golf club of this city, at the Exchange, on Tuesday evening, the 31st inst., at seven o'clock. (Signed) Geo. Woodruff, Robert Mackay, Jno. Caig, Jas. Dickson, Managers; Geo. Hogarth, Treasurer. Savannah, twentieth December 1811." The original is in the possession of the granddaughter of the recipient. There seems to be some suggestion that these pioneers of American golf were of Scottish origin, as pioneers of the game until lately mostly were, and it might be appropriate to mention that Savannah, whose people are said to be celebrated for their love of pleasure, piety, and sport, has in it the oldest theatre in the United

States, while it also claims to have started the first Sunday school in the world, founded by Wesley and perpetuated by Whitefield. If it started here, this was not a bad place for American golf to start at.

III

Rulers, statesmen, diplomatists, begin to take more serious account of the sport-loving factor in human nature than has been their wont. Downing Street, Washington, the Quai d'Orsay, and all the other nerve-centres of international affairs, where there are housed all the cleverest modern masters of opportunism, have entered upon the study of its peculiarities and tendencies, recognising that here is an instrument of the most delicate perfection for the cultivation of amity between people and people when the bureaucrats have set the lead. The British Empire is being soldered up with sport. Besides the constant visits of Colonial cricketers, have we not had with us recently two separate detachments of Colonial footballers, and has it not been evident that while the Colonial Governments have given their representatives the most open and material support, even to the extent of voting them certain supplies, Downing Street has smiled approvingly, and has, now and again, when not many people were looking, given a pleasant little pat to the wheel of friendship as it went rolling along from Cornwall to Edinburgh, and from Blackheath to Dublin? And was it not an open secret that the "very highest influences" were brought to bear upon the controlling authorities, with a view to avoiding the recent breakage in the

regular sequence of Anglo-Australian encounters on the cricket field? The *entente cordiale* with France is being promoted from a toy model to a big machine that is working in the streets, largely as the result of the awakening of popular sympathies by such means as games. All the congruous elements of different countries far apart are being attracted to each other, as if magnetically, by such influences as the motor car, the bicycle, cricket, football, and, far from least, by golf: and the potency of these charms lies in the fact that when they are set to work, men's minds are relaxed from the general materialistic sternness of their business times, and the humanity in them is asserting itself.

Now, all those good men who take the cosmopolitan view of human happiness must see that among all games with powers like this there can be none of greater adaptability and general use and efficiency than golf. It may be, and is used by people of every colour, race, creed, and temperament, in every climate and all the year round. No recreation, apart from the simplest contests of the river and field, has ever been so universal since the world began, with the single exception of chess. And wherever and whenever it is played it extends its benign influence towards the promotion of fast friendship among the players. There is no freemasonry like the freemasonry of golf. To its temples in every land are always welcomed the faithful and earnest craftsman from where'er he came, and he is passed on the signs of the bag and the stance and the little pimpled ball. For it is one of the articles of belief that no man can be a good and enthusiastic golfer of experience and at the same time a thoroughly bad fellow, for at the

outset of his career the bad fellow would never be happy in his game; others would not help to make him so, and he would either be stung by the consciousness of his own defects and reform, or he would slip away into the small silent pitiable minority who leave the links one day never to return. Thus has our happy game of golf wound a bright cordon round the world, and so does she play her part in the great evolution of general contentment.

IV

“In spring,” we have been told in the *Georgics*, “heat returns to the bones.” And the blood runs eagerly through the golfer’s veins. April and May are the months of hope and of exultation. There is joy in the present, in the showers and the sunshine, and a great joy in prospect in the future. Each true golfer is a lover of Nature, and something of a philosopher, and at this season, as at no other, when he gets wakened on a bright morning and sees the country clean and fresh, and coming again into bright green and many colours, while the birds sing at *allegro* and *fortissimo*, a deep pleasure fills his being, the pleasure of spring. He is alive, alive; and it is fine to be alive. Summer is glorious, autumn is beautiful, cold winter has charms for those who have proper feeling for it; but spring, the Germinal, is surely Nature’s favourite season, and the golfer must always love his spring.

It gives him hope and thought. Change always induces reflection, and here we have the change of the seasons, and a little of all of them in a short space of

time. An old proverb says that "April borrows three days of March, and they are ill." But as often she borrows several days of May, and they are warm and sunny, and so hereabouts we have the winds, and the showers, and the sunshine ; and who can walk on the links to-day and not think something of what the rain has been doing, and what the winds have done, and what the sun is doing and is going to do? Here they are all together, great master wonders to be thought much of. They are much to all men ; everything to the sportsman and the folks of the outdoor life.

The sun and the rain are in such daily association in the days of the sportsman's spring, and more than ever is he inclined at this season to give some passing thought to the phenomena of Nature, that one comes to wonder sometimes whether he reflects as he might do on the eternal exchange, how the drops of water that the sun takes up from the fields over which he tramps, the golf links that he plays over, the rivers and streams that he fishes, are every one of them placed back again, perhaps not on the same fields or in the same rivers, but in some field or river somewhere. The bare fact is one of elementary knowledge ; but its extensions are not so much so, and are interesting to think upon. If the sun always gave back to each particular sportsman the rain that it had taken away from his own playing fields and rivers, how dull would his life be from the knowledge of what the weather and the seasons had certainly for him in the future? With the caprice of the clouds and the wind there is no such even and regular return of that which was taken away. The golf links of the Lothians may be kept rained upon and moist so that the turf is the most perfect, all with the rain that was

sucked up from the courses of the south coast of England, round about Deal and Sandwich and Rye; and surely when the links in the south are parched, and when they are green and moist in the north, we must think of that.

V

It behoves every earnest golfer to keep a match-book in which there shall be faithfully recorded the results, with some particulars, of all the matches whatsoever that he shall play in the course of each season. Yet it is likely that not more than two or three golfers in every club, if indeed so many, keep such a record of the golf that they have played, which is sinking away into the forgotten history of their golfing lives. The idea of the private match-book may have occurred to many golfers, who, on a careful consideration of the circumstances of the case, have rejected it, though it goes without saying that the chief reason for the absence of the book in the majority of cases is simple neglect. Those who deliberately avoid the intellectual pleasures of the match-book do so either because they conceive that there is something namby-pamby in the thing, and that it savours too much of the keeping of a little diary which so few people know how to keep, consequently degenerating into a record of the trivial acts instead of the life-governing thoughts; or they are deterred by the fact that there are no such books with ruled columns ready for the purpose which are at all agreeable to their ideas as to what a match-book ought to be. Certainly there is no

ready-ruled match-book; the little things to fit the waistcoat pocket are hopelessly inadequate, and really are only fit for doll's golf, so that it is one of the things to wonder at that there are still apparently some thousands of golfers—beginners for the most part, you may be sure—who buy these trifles year by year.

But perhaps it is as well that there is no stereotyped form of match-book, to which we might be persuaded to attach ourselves with some misgivings as to its form, and the irritation that would be caused us in the future by the attempt to fill up constantly one particular column that might seem to be either unnecessary or suggestive of indelicate revelations. You will not find the ideas of many men in agreement as to what ought to go down in the book and what ought not. One will want spaces reserved for full particulars as to wind and weather, of the ball with which he played, and of the many other little details of varying importance, forming the sum of the circumstance of the day's golf. Another will have a horror of such conceits, and will limit his confessions to statements of the date, the opponent, and the result. As in other matters, the medium is the happiest choice; but the difference of taste which could not be accommodated by so many different varieties of match-book, suggests at once that the proper course to pursue is for each player to purchase a perfectly plain book and rule it off in so many columns to his own satisfaction; or even, indeed, for the sake of a neater and less formal appearance, and an arrangement which is more accommodating, leave it blank, and let the facts of the match be inserted in order, just as the man is disposed to insert them at the time

of the entry. Then a blank column will not in after years convey any reproach in the matter of a possible suppression of the truth, nor one overcrowded tell too much a tale of despondency and excuse on the one hand, or on the other of that boastfulness that comes not well from the heart of a good golfer.

Now the beginning and the continuation of a match-book is a serious matter, and the golfer will do well to come to an understanding with himself beforehand as to the policy that he will pursue in regard to it. It is essential that the strictest truth, and all the essential truth, should at all times be set down, and it is only a simple extension of the principle involved that if any matches are to be recorded they must all be so. The chronicler of the time must not consider himself as historian, and set himself to discriminate between what is important and what is trivial; for, as in all things, it will be many years hence, when the matters have been well sifted in the cold recollection of the mind, before such a determination can be accurately made. Therefore it is the duty of the chronicler to state the full facts, that is to say, as full as he determined they should ever be according to his system of match-book keeping, and he must leave it to himself in after years, when, the chronicler now exalted to the student of his own history, he can ponder over the statements in his leisure and make such judgments upon them as he is disposed. Thus it is of the essence of the proper making of such match-books that no fault of the maker at any time or in any game shall be in any way extenuated, and that nothing to the discredit of the opponent shall be set down maliciously, so that in days to come, when the

player shall have advanced many more seasons towards the end of his golf, in turning over these pages and with their honest help fighting his matches over again, he shall truly behold "the bright countenance of truth in the quiet and still air of delightful studies." So it seems that the best match-book should rightly be a strictly private thing; if it were meant as a book for the table or any other place where it might be exposed to the gaze of the curious, there might at some time come a reluctance to the owner to state in full the truth of the day's play, since the honest criticism of a partner in a foursome or of an opponent, to some who did not understand, might not appear so necessary as was actually the case. This faithful record should be kept under lock and key, and it should be taken with him when the golfer goes far afield for play which is to last more than a day, and the entries should be made on the night of each day. It will be soon enough for others to pry into this confessional when the golfer who whispered into it at nights is no more. That such present labour will afford a rich sequence of future pleasure there can be no doubt. Just as there are no friends like the old friends, and no wine like the old wine, so one is sometimes disposed to fancy that there is no golf like the old golf that is now indeed but a memory, and one often much too dim at that. The match-book will refresh the mind to the recollection of dear friends with whom one is no longer associated, and of fine sport that one had with them on days when the thrills of life seemed to be a little quicker than they are now. By the mention of an incident, and occasionally by giving the score of a few holes, much of the whole game, shot and shot,

is conjured up in the memory in all its keenness and its tensity.

And it shall come as a good recommendation in this matter that the golfer who is the favourite hero of us all, as he was a pattern of the golfing virtues, made a match-book for himself while he was still playing the schoolboy golf, and kept it continuously for the rest of his time. Freddie Tait's match-book was just what we might expect it to be. It was a very honest thing, and Mr. Low, who has handled it and copied some of it for the deep interest of us all, remarks on the way in which the brave soldier golfer never spared himself, his partner, nor his opponents, but dealt out praise and censure with a level hand. One day, though he had halved his round, he says, "Played as bad a round as possible"; and at another time his comment is, "Never played worse with the exception of a few iron shots." Then as to a four-some it is, "The characteristic of the game was the bad play of both"; and of his partner in another match he remarks, "The play of Mr. — was feeble in the extreme."

There were eight column divisions in Tait's match-book. First there was the place for the date, then for the name of the links, and the third for the statement of the parties to the match. The fourth column was for the mention of the odds of the handicap if any, or for the name of the competition if he was engaged in one. Then there was one column for holes won and another for holes lost, a broad one for "remarks," and a last little one at the side of the page for the total of the score. Generally the "remarks" were brief and pointed, and it is these which make the record of the play of the most

beloved golfer we have known so real and human, so that it is a pleasure to sit by the fire and create some fancies of these matches. Now and then there is a little humour; here and there a touch of sarcasm at the expense of "F. G. T.," as he generally referred to himself. Round by round there is the full story of the way in which he won the championship at Sandwich, and the next entry concerns the very next match that he played, which was the day after at Rye, when, with his honours new upon him, he essayed the task of playing the best ball of Mr. H. S. Colt and Mr. J. O. Fairlie. The remarks run: "H. S. C. and J. O. F. too strong for the golfed-out Champion, to whom they showed no mercy. H. S. C. and J. O. F. both played a good game and did some very fine holes." Here there is a 6 in the "Lost" column, and it is a notable thing that this, on 23rd May, was the first figure that had appeared in this column of defeat since 16th April, though golf was being played almost every day. In his comments on the final of that same championship he twice pays compliments to the pluck of Mr. Hilton, who in the game was very soon left without the slightest chance of victory, and was beaten by a full eight holes. The gods would never permit the favourite Freddie to be beaten by the finest player of his time, and that player now refers to his early engagements with the soldier as the day when Tait "commenced his career as the slaughterer of Hilton." Another day we find Freddie revelling in two glorious matches with Andrew Kirkaldy on the new course at St. Andrews. In the morning he lost by a couple of holes, but in the afternoon he was the winner on the last green. "Another splendid match," he rejoices; "both in

great form. F. G. T. only halved the third hole by carelessly moving his ball with hand while removing a piece of grass. The hole was played out and won by F. G. T., but he had, of course, to lose a stroke, according to the rules of golf. This unfortunate accident made the difference of one hole. A. K., 80, a magnificent score. F. G. T., in: 4 3 5 4 4 4 5 4 4 = 37." Here is another comment, "R. T. B. very fair. Self good at first, but got too many up, and then got careless, with the usual result." He lost that match by a hole. Another time, when he was playing the best of two balls, he wrote: "Played badly. The two balls also bad." That match was fittingly halved. In this way we can follow the happy Freddie all the way through the spring and summer to the end of the year on all the best links that are to be found, and these judgments of his will serve as models to other men who in this small matter would copy the methods of the perfect golfer.

There is this entry in the match-book alongside the date 31st July 1888, concerning a match with Mr. Norman Playfair: "Driving very poor. Put a ball through a man's hat and had to pay five shillings." Young Freddie, then only eighteen years of age, went to old Tom Morris to complain of his ill-luck in the matter, but Tom answered him wisely, "Ah, Master Freddie, ye may be vera thankful that it's only a hat, and no' an oak coffin ye hae to pay for." Even now, when the sad happenings of the South African War, which at the time so wrung our heart-strings with misery, have been somewhat mellowed by time, the great consoler, it is impossible to glide into this channel of reminiscence without feeling that the pleasure of it is touched with

melancholy that the body that held that noble soul should be resting among the trees by the banks of the Riet River.

VI

There is nothing like the winds of March for testing the golfer in every department of his play. Quite timid golfers are sometimes heard to say that they don't mind rain; but if a man does not mind big winds, regards them both from the sporting and scientific standpoints, and manages to make some respectable golf while they are in charge of the air, he is a worthy player, and he may make his mark some day. It often happens that you can apply test after test to two different golfers, and they will both answer equally to them; but the wind test will separate them at once. The man who can play the real game in a high wind, and use it to his advantage at every opportunity, knows golf as others do not. He is a finished player, and he rather likes the days of March for the rich sport that they afford—the real big game of the links. The other man, when he hears the wind playing like a German band round the side of the house as he tries to get himself off to sleep at night, thinks to himself that he will have to give up the idea of golf in the morning. He should not. Even if he never learns the scientific treatment of wind in golf, he would find his game improved generally and made more powerful by playing it at times like these under severe difficulties, and it is worth playing in a wind if only to taste the sweet joys of golfing in a calm afterwards, just as there is

one point of satisfaction in getting wet through on the links because the change afterwards is so delicious.

You always find that a golfer is very much the better for a short season on a very windy course. When he goes back to his home course, very likely inland and protected, driving seems such a simple, easy thing, and he lets out at his tee shots with a freedom and a certainty which make for a greater boldness and strength in his game. North Berwick is one of the windiest courses. You do get wind there in the spring months, and there are hundreds of golfers who testify to the good that a short stay there has done to their game. They have simply got to learn to golf in all kinds of winds. It is like throwing a non-swimmer into seven feet of water with only a thin piece of rope round his middle. He very soon invents a way of making greater security and comfort for himself. Stay at North Berwick long enough, and it may affect your style for life. Mr. Robert Maxwell has a peculiar punching, but withal very powerful style, which is attributed to his upbringing at North Berwick. A man disposed to probe very deep down for causes and effects might arrive at the conclusion that the reason why, speaking very generally, there are better players and better courses, and more of each on the east coast of Scotland than on the west, is because it happens that the links there are more exposed, and there are more windy days upon them than on those on the other side of the country. Not that there are not big winds very frequently to be dealt with in the neighbourhood of Troon and Prestwick, which surely have their full share, and it was at a championship at Prestwick that old Willie Park delivered himself

of his famous remark, "Guid God ! When I get ma club up I canna get it doon again !" so strongly was the wind blowing on that occasion.

VII

In the spring the professionals come tumbling on to the stage of golf once more with their happy welcome cry, "Here we are again." Sometimes in the middle of the summer season people are apt to say that we get at least enough of these professional competitions, and that it would be agreeable if we had a little more time to think of our own golf in all its varied charm, instead of our attention being invited day by day to the many permutations and combinations of "the quartette" in exhibition matches, and the aspirations of such as Jones among those next to them. But what a dull season it would be if Vardon and Braid were not up against Taylor and Herd somewhere or other—it does not matter where—just as in the olden time, or Herd and Braid did not show once again at the little course of Slocum-on-Mudbury that there was something wrong with their running in that never-to-be-forgotten foursome when four hundred sovereigns were at stake. And then when Rowland Jones is included in one of these foursome combinations, we say, quite pleased, "Ha, Jones is coming on ! Jones is going to assert himself !" One day Jack White is in again—that happy-hearted Jack, who came by a great championship in 1904 at Sandwich, where records were falling in every round—and then we say to ourselves very good-naturedly, "I hope Jack will get on to his drive again in one of these matches !" Or

the fourth man may be Tom Vardon, and that is very interesting, because Tom is a great big sportsman who is stuffed tight with the effervescing joy of life. If it is Andrew Kirkaldy, as it is occasionally, we rub our hands and observe, "Grand matchplayer is Sam! Now we shall see how a foursome should be played! Good as the best is Sam!"

The fact of the matter is, that these professional matches and competitions are now a fast and integral part of our golfing system. We may think that we could do without them, and in the summer-time we rail constantly against them, and say that they never would be missed. But how we should miss them! Golfing life would not be the same if there were not occasions to make such almost daily observations as those just quoted. The season would be without salt, and our little amateur combats would seem to be lacking in an unknown stimulus that was always there before.

Then what a void in golfing life would there be if there were not constant occasion to express admiration for the supremacy and the prowess of the triumvirate—Harry Vardon, Braid, and Taylor. When we are too frequently told of the achievement and the skill of the heroes of the olden time, it is well to think of what the triumvirate has done and still can do. Perhaps not many golfers, even among those who pay faithful attention to such matters, have a proper sense of the amazing record of these three men. I had occasion to analyse it lately, and I believe not in any other sport have the periods of three such champions coincided as they have done in golf during the last few years. It is a strange thing that the fates should have pitchforked Braid, Vardon, and Taylor into the arena at

the same time, each man being so much above all outside the three. It is as if Ormonde, Donovan, and Flying Fox had been in the same race for the Derby. In one sense it seems a waste of exceptional talent on one period, to the possible impoverishment of another, but golf spectators and players should appreciate the advantage of the times in which they live, for it is unlikely that three such golfers will ever be to the fore at the same time again after these three have gone their way, and it is as certain as anything that a hundred years from now the golf world will speak reverently of the great triumvirate of the early days of the twentieth century. It will certainly be remembered that after this triumvirate had been established eleven years in each other's company, they wound up a championship first, second, and third against the biggest field that had ever contested a championship, this being at Muirfield in 1906.

Three times in those eleven years the triumvirate collectively achieved the highest possible distinction in this way, the first being in 1900, which was Taylor's year, the second in 1901, when Braid won, and the third in 1906, when Braid was again successful. Taylor was the first of the three to show activity, and he won the championship in 1894 and 1895. Not until 1896 was the triumvirate definitely constituted, as it were, by the whole three, Vardon, Taylor, and Braid appearing in the championship at the same time. In that year Vardon finished first, Taylor second, and Braid sixth. In the following year Braid, in the second place in the lists, was the foremost man of the three. Then there was a remarkable run, for the triumvirate found the winner in seven of the next nine years. Vardon scored twice

running to begin with; then Taylor and Braid; in 1902 Vardon and Braid tied for second place; the next year Vardon was first again; Taylor and Braid tied for second position in 1904, and this was followed by two championships for Braid. Only three times in eleven years did the triumvirate let the championship go out of their small circle, and it may be mentioned that the three men who beat them on these respective occasions were Mr. Hilton in 1897, Herd in 1902, and Jack White in 1904.

Adding up the records of positions and scores of all golfers who took part in these championship competitions when the triumvirate did, and making, so to speak, one long championship of it, the triumvirate lead the way, and the rest—the very best of them—are absolutely tailed off. The scores registered in the championships, added up, afford the following result: Harry Vardon, 3426; James Braid, 3446; J. H. Taylor, 3454. Herd fittingly comes fourth with 3527, and then there is an enormous gap between him and the fifth man. Taylor would, of course, be in a different position if we counted in the two early championships that he won, and let it be said for Taylor that, including this year of 1907, he has been second for the championship four times in succession and five in all—a magnificent record such as stamps him as the most brilliantly consistent champion of all time. But it is a heartbreaking record for Taylor all the same, and this great and popular player has all golfers' sympathy.

Golfers are not like the brooks of poets; they cannot go on for ever. We shall look to see the great men of to-day playing fine golf in twenty years from now, and upon occasion they will play

such rounds as will make us say, "That was just as in the olden time!" But their average of merit must diminish, and probably all the premier three, or at least two of them, have passed the high-water mark of their ability and their tide of supremacy is receding. Who, then, is to succeed them? For years past we have been looking for likely and worthy successors. There are many fine golfers on the links, and occasionally great things are prophesied of some of them; but disappointment almost invariably follows. The times do not seem to be breeding any more Vardons, Taylors, or Braids. A triumvirate of the future is not yet in the making. Our grandparents and other good people constantly tell us that there are as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it, and it might seem a foolish thing to suggest that we shall never again have such a band of supreme artists at the game as those whose works we enjoy witnessing in these days. But are not the chances heavily against there being again in our time simultaneously three more men of such outstanding ability as these three, each one of whom would be the sole man of his generation if it were not for the other two? Cricket did not produce three Graces at the same time; billiards had only one Roberts. You could not imagine three Graces and three Roberts. But we have had them in golf in late years.

One is inclined to think that the fact is that the men who are great to-day were trained in a severer and more heroic school than their successors will be, and they had each a spark of genius which the conditions of the time fanned into the full flame of glory. We cannot expect three more of them to come along at the same time; but we might expect

and do want one more, someone who shall be an acknowledged chief of the game, someone whom we shall be glad to see win the championship, as we cannot be so glad when it is won by a golfer than whom there is no one more unlikely ever to win it again. I am no believer in these things going in a round of comparative mediocrity. What seems to be the matter with most modern aspirants is that they have not that touch of genius which is so evidently possessed by the men who have been making golfing history during the past decade. They may drive well, play their irons well, putt well, and they may do many grand holes and accomplish numerous brilliant rounds, breaking many records. At times they may beat the champions and past champions. But they are not the same golfers. Watch them play a round and you can see the difference. They have not the same genius. They are merely ordinary human golfers, though good ones at that; they are palpably suffering too much from mere human weakness. You see them trying hard, trying so very hard. The triumvirate do not seem to try. It is just there. There is one of them who tries less than any golfer who has ever been born, and he does more when trying less than those others trying hard. Yes, it is just there—the genius for the game.

VIII

We may set it down with some conviction that William Shakespeare was a born golfer. It does not matter that golf was as rare in the glorious days in which he lived as are eagles in twentieth-century

Britain. We do not say that he played golf, had seen it played, or had ever heard of it. So far as we are aware, there is no evidence to support any such propositions. Yet he was a born golfer, and if the game had come his way he would have played it, and one doubts not that he would also have excelled in it; so that it is well that it was after his time, or England would not have been proud in the possession of such work of his as is the envy of all other nations. For, of all the classic writers whose work we read, there is none who gives such evidence in almost every line of it that he was possessed of a perfectly ideal golfing temperament, of a philosophy that seems constantly to have a subtle and most perfect application to the life of the links. Through and through it is the real golfer's philosophy, that which is the best suited to the intensity of the game, to its deep humanity, and that which serves for the complete appreciation and full joy of the game. You may read all the other poets, from Homer and Virgil to Byron and Tennyson, without ever a thought of the links obtruding upon your study; but it is no evidence of a vagrant mind, or one that is indifferent to the sweetest music of words, that not three consecutive minutes can hardly ever be spent in reaching Shakespearian lines without the fancy being touched by the perfection of the philosophy and sentiment when applied to the peculiar pleasures and pains of the golfer.

Only one other classic writer with whom we are familiar can give such solace to the troubled player, such wise counsel to him who errs or is in doubt, such chastening admonitions to those who have offended against the spirit of the game and whose consciences are disturbed. That is Marcus Aurelius,

and we pass on the volume of his rules of life to all those players who from time to time seek their homes at night weary and depressed after a day on the links, when all has been for the worst and despair broods darkly over the soul. After all, the golfer who is indifferent to the ills he sometimes, nay often, suffers, and can in an hour completely forget the tragedies of two rounds, is somewhat too phlegmatic, and there will always be denied to him the higher ecstasies by which the men of finer and more nervous temperament are uplifted. We do not set it against a man that when he has done discredit to his capabilities, he should show many signs of inward turmoil and display much active vexation towards innocent persons and things on seeking his home. He may rail against the arrangements of his household, and he may appear peevish to the members of his family, and find new faults in their manners and conduct. If they are the kind, sympathetic people that they so often are, they will bear with him and wait patiently for the passing of the cloud. On the morrow the good game may be back in all its fulness and richness, and then at eventide there will trip lightly homewards a happy and withal a penitent golfer, who will not be slow to confess his fault and to make a full measure of amends. The colour of life will have changed from the dull grey to the red of roses. And how much thinner and poorer would be the days of our golfing life did they not contain such constant change and yield to us such a variety of emotion! But it is the days of sorrow rather than the days of gladness that teach us the great lessons that all worthy golfers should learn, and they should not neglect the cultivation of the philosophic spirit

for which the best opportunities are then afforded. So it is likely the stricken player may find a deep and wholesome contemplation in his lonely privacy at the end of the day, by meditating with Marcus Aurelius on the morals of life and events. He will tell you that "you have suffered a thousand inconveniences from not being contented with performing what your capacity was given you to perform," and so, by such a little hint as this, he will lead you home to the simple truth that your proper game is not your best game, and that much of the misery that obtains in the world of golf is due to the universal habit of too high appraisal of the quality of one's play.

But it is Shakespeare who teaches us best to be good golfers, and the secret of the perfect application of his sentiment and philosophy to the golfer's life is that his writings are so intensely human, and that of all the diversions of man there is none that so much stirs in him the simple instincts, reduces him to the simplest human elements. A round of golf will sometimes bare faults and qualities in a man that have been hidden from the time of their formation in his early years. It is to the man who constantly undergoes this fierce analysis that Shakespeare will most appeal. Let the golfer test his text and see the perfection of the result. The quotation selected for the first day of the year for a Shakespearean calendar that was hung up in a golfer's den was—

"Like a bold champion, I assume the lists,
Nor ask advice of any other thought
But faithfulness, and courage."

Could golfer take a better motto?

IX.

No class of man looks forward to the spring with keener anticipation than the golfer. Overburdened with his winter's discontent, he fancies it as a time of sunshine, of dry courses, of sprouting young grass that holds up the ball on the suburban links and gives us the first good brassey lies that we have had for some months, of the frequent retirement of the energetic worm, of the quickening of the greens, of the leafing of the trees and the hedgerows, and the brightening of the face of Nature. The golfer is generally a strongly human man, who is not careless of natural beauties as are too many in these increasingly prosaic and strenuous days. Perhaps he likes the coming of the springtime best of all, because he is then enabled to play his game in the best degree of comfort. He is less hampered with heavy clothing, and his hands and wrists keep warm without any cumbersome artificial assistance. And then also he is persuaded, and he is evidently right, that the balls fly very much better in the spring sunshine than they ever did through the heavy and often murky atmosphere of the winter days. Even the golf ball welcomes the coming of spring, and given that it is properly struck it gets a better and longer flight through the air when it is dry and light, and it runs better on the dry turf when it comes down, so that the player finds himself being given encouragement that helps him wonderfully on to his game. And so the man who usually goes by the name of the Average Golfer believes all through every autumn and winter that he comes on to his game best of all in the spring, and that that is the only time of the

year when he really does play his best, his real game. The only time when he does not believe that he plays his best game in the spring is in the spring.

The fact is that the conditions of springtime are rather made up of a set of contradictions of a very aggravating character, and they often play the devil with the game of this Average Golfer, the system of which is not too firmly consolidated. This person, one takes it, is a man of medium young to middle age, a great enthusiast, of good means, one more or less constantly engaged in business, having a fair number of social obligations to attend to in evenings, and a golfing handicap of somewhere between six and twelve. This man is possibly afflicted with a troublesome liver, and this organ has a peculiar and most aggravating way of asserting itself in the springtime as it has at no other season. Then it is up to all kinds of tricks, the entire physical system of the man is disarranged and thrown out of gear, and the result is that when all Nature is smiling and the larks are piping as though their little throats would burst with the fulness of their melody, the erstwhile hopeful golfer is in a wretched state of mind, trying new stances for his drive, new ways of gripping, a swing much longer or much shorter than usual, and manœuvring with his strokes in all other kinds of ways, in the vain hope that he might be permitted to drive at least as well as he did in January, instead of foundering one ball in three and lifting up one of the others high towards the heavens. But there is compensation in the increased hopefulness of spring. The game may be poor, weaker than it was hoped to be. But it will mend; it will surely mend.

MEN AND THINGS

I

FOR one reason, if not for more, a Liberal Government is popular with golfers of true feeling—because it gives Mr. Arthur Balfour, the ex-Prime Minister, more to the links than when he is burdened with the care of Ministerial office. In the days of the sweet idleness of Opposition we find him at play on a golf links here and on another one there; now opening a new course and delighting the assembled players with a little speech, which is rich in the spirit of the game; and at some other time enjoying a foursome with some old political friend, or with J. H. Taylor or James Braid as his partner. As Mr. Balfour is the better, as he will tell you, for being a golfer, so is golf the happier for his intimate association with it; and some people who do not know and cannot understand, not being of golf, think we make over-much of a statesman's interest in our pastime, as if the great of the land were not bound closely up with other sports. Good and earnest-minded golfers feel that they are kin to this player, because he is himself a pattern of the man imbued with the best sense of the honour and glory of the game. He is loyal to it, he has the sentiment of it, and he has seen through to the inner recesses of its charm. Thus he is not ashamed, as no

good golfer ever is, of abandoning himself entirely to its delights, of setting all his emotions and his thoughts free to race and frolic in the joy of the links, and of allowing the high dignity of the great statesman to sink away into the simple naturalness of the earnest golfer. So we like this late Prime Minister not because of his political rank, but because he loves his game and does his best by it, and is at all times an example to the acolytes who come forward in nervous ignorance of the great meaning of golf.

Then it is less interesting to consider what style of player Mr. Balfour is, than what kind of man he shows himself to be amid the trials and the triumphs of the links, where, it is indisputably held, a man's entire human nature, despite all efforts at repression, is forced up to the surface for all to see. Here, then, we see the real Mr. Balfour as he is never seen on the Front Bench at Westminster. There are no mashie shots to foozle, and no drives to top into the bunker in the House of Commons, to make a man feel that life is yet a feeble, disappointing thing. To the Parliamentarian, the nearest thing in pleasure to laying a long approach shot "dead" against the hole is a successful speech, or the engineering of a majority on a division which is something above par, and these are dull things in comparison. Mr. Balfour, then, as we have studied him many times at this testing game, is a man of many and quickly changing emotions, of a temperament somewhat highly strung and nervous, and capable of enormous enthusiasms and alternative depressions. There is nothing that is phlegmatic about this Ministerial golfer. There is something of the schoolboy left in him. One day I saw him driving from the tee and getting a beauty, so that his ball

was cleanly flicked for the best part of two hundred yards in a straight line to the hole. It is not in human nature to wait for tardy praise in such ecstatic moments, and he, his face aglow with pleasure, turned about to his opponent, exclaiming, "I *do* push them away, don't I?"

On the other hand, there are times when he is sadly mindful of failure, and he is much too serious a golfer ever to forget the most evil things he has done. One time we saw him playing in a four-some—his favourite form of golf—with Mr. Eric Hambro as his partner, and after foozling his approach in a deplorable manner, he called out wearily to his partner, "Do you know, Hambro, I once did that kind of thing for a whole fortnight!" It must have been the blackest fortnight in the right honourable gentleman's career. He is something of a philosopher on the links, and when he makes a bad stroke he sometimes explains how it came about to those who are near him, or to the course and the sky, if he is momentarily isolated. This, indeed, is one of the very few respects in which the Prime Minister falls from what we may regard as the standard of the ideal golfer. He is inclined to reach too hastily at a conclusion, and some say to speak too much. Some masters have held that the perfect golfer plays in absolute silence, and Mr. Balfour is not an absolutely silent golfer, though in his case he is none the less earnest. It has been stated that never on the links does he make use of any other ejaculation than "Dear me!" but this statement, besides being untrue, is absurd, and is not complimentary to him as a golfer. Let him miss a shot or do anything which he ought not to have done, and the human

man comes out above the statesman, though, of course, nobody has ever heard Mr. Balfour commit himself to any unbecoming remark. But in the production of effect from the minor expletives he is most skilful. "Botheration!" is the commonest of his ejaculations, and as he says it whilst witnessing the descent of his little white ball into a yawning bunker, one, as an old golfer, sometimes realises that the most satisfactory results in this respect are not always produced from the use of the strongest materials. "Oh, this is indeed shocking!" is another favourite form of expression, which, as he says it, speaks a volume upon the agony of the mind.

For the rest he is just a good, determined golfer, who is a first-class sportsman, never giving any quarter on the links, and never expecting any. You never see Mr. Balfour pick up his ball whilst there is still the remotest chance left of his dividing the hole with his opponent, and he would reject with scorn, like every other true golfer, the suggestion that he takes his golf for the sake of the exercise only. It is because he is thus keen that other and better players find it a constant pleasure to match themselves against him, or to become his partner in a foursome. They know then that they are out for golf.

"Big" Crawford, his old-time favourite caddie, who keeps a ginger-beer tent alongside the eighth green at North Berwick, flies the Scottish standard from the top of it when Mr. Balfour is on his most beloved course. A Russian grand duke, who did not know the truth, once naïvely suggested to Crawford that the flag was flying as a compliment to him, the Russian. "Na, na, sir," said Crawford, "begging

your pardon and with great respect, but it's for one greater than you."

"Who is looking after Mr. Balfour?" they whispered one time at St. Andrews, when the right hon. gentleman was playing himself into the captaincy of the Royal and Ancient Club, and was then Chief Secretary for Ireland, and regularly attended by plain-clothes detectives in case of accident. "I am looking after Mr. Balfour!" Crawford said when he overheard. "I'm enough." And he would have been.

II

It should not be set against a golfer for foolishness or faddism that he gives pet names to some of his favourite clubs that have served him well through many hard campaigns, and between him and which there has grown up a very close degree of intimacy, for some of the greatest players have given this rank of name to their trusted clubs. "My driver," even "My best driver" or "My old driver," is a cold term to apply to that fine head and shaft that you think have no equals on the links—at least for you. All drivers may be called drivers; shall we have no other name for the champion that has roamed with us and played with us over courses all the way from Dornoch to Westward Ho!? Call him "Bill" if you like, and "Bill" is a very good name; or if your fancy leans that way, and she is slender and whippy, you may call her "Bess." But better keep to human names. There is a man who calls his baffy "Jumbo," and it does not seem a nice name. I have a golfing friend who has a driver that he calls "Ephraim," and it is

one of the most wonderful drivers ever seen, with such a long shaft that it needs a giant to wield it, but its owner is something of a giant too. When I hear him ask for Ephraim I know that mighty schemes are afoot, and, straining my eyes to the far distant green, I wonder that even old Ephraim should ever be called upon to make such efforts. But Ephraim has a way with him that makes for success. He is not to be used often, and then when he is he does his job well. That is Ephraim. And do not many of us know the famous golfer who has a dear wooden putter who goes by the name of Fanny? Fanny has done fine duty in championships ere this, and her master knows her every whim and mood. She is a delicate creature is Fanny, and she is not so young as she used to be, and Mr. John, her master, never takes her out in these days when it is wet.

III

Many golfers carry in their minds a fairly clear picture of a club that they regard as their ideal. They have some notion as to its looks, the shape of the head, and the length and the thickness of the shaft. Particularly do they know what that club feels like in their hands as they grip it to make the shot for which it, and it alone, is perfectly adapted. They have never seen such a club, and they fear sometimes that they never will. Some old favourite of theirs has some of the points that are possessed by this ideal, but it has not got them in the same ripe perfection, and it has obvious faults which at times have cost their master dearly. There is no reproachful word to say

against that old favourite. It is a good club, and it has done a fine service on the links, and as for its imperfections, are they not what its maker gave to it, trifling imperfections, too, which we are generously disposed to overlook when considering that fine record of service. But it is not the ideal club; it does not feel like that club that we sometimes handle in our imagination, and then enjoy a glorious sense of power as with no other.

It is a pleasant thing to treasure in the mind such a club as this; but let it stop at that. If one grand delusion in which there is nothing harmful, and which on the whole but makes for good, as most ideals do, is not to be destroyed, never set out to reduce that club, now made of but filmy thought, to cold iron or clumsy wood. It will not be the same, be the fancy ever so exact. The first efforts will bring forth results that will be far poorer in quality than those made by old favourites of whom we have spoken, and it will be as if the favourites have jealousy and resent these new-born interlopers, so that they will for the time being cease to give their best work to the man who is so plainly discontented, and who, being so, is lacking in confidence. And the faults that are in those first models that come thus from the mind only increase and aggravate the more as attempts are made to repair them. It is a Will-o'-the-wisp, indeed, is this ideal club, be it driver or brassey or cleek or iron, and it may lure the golfer to a shocking fate. Let us cling to the old favourites and be kind and generous to them. It has been said, and it is no doubt true, that the perfect wife has never yet been born, and some men may reflect upon the advantages of life if they had a perfect wife such as one whom they have painted

in their fancy. But in their honesty they will turn their thoughts away from such conceits, and let them dwell upon the manifold excellences of the wives they have, who have hearts that beat, and who, kind and patient and generous, have those human weaknesses which would be faults in the ideal, but which only seem to give to the being the greater human completeness and even perfection. Thus, with this tolerant affection and appreciation, must we look upon our favourite clubs, and leave the ideal to lie unmaterialised and worthless in the mind, a pretty thing to think about, but impossible.

Once there was a man who made a grand effort to materialise the ideal that he had cherished through many seasons. It was a brassey. Some twenty brasses had he had made, but none of them was quite the thing that he craved. There was something wanting, and thus his shots had not the sting that they ought to have, or that he thought they should possess. But, so often disappointed, he let alone his search for the ideal for a while, and made good friends with one of the real. But he could not forget the ideal brassey, and it grew more and more definite in his imagination. He would look at it there with a smile on his face as he would be going home in the train, and he would handle it and make with it that long carry against the wind that no club of wood and brass in his hands had ever made. Then he took the professional clubmaker into his confidence, and in odd moments after rounds, in the shop they would sometimes talk of this great club, but neither would venture to suggest that it should be made, though they spoke of it as if it were made. They would pick a new one from the stand, and the idealist would say, "Now,

Solomon"—he always called it Solomon—"has a shade more hook than that, and there is a little sharper angle to his nose." The worthy clubmaker entered fully into the spirit of the fancy, and seriously, and he would answer, "Ay, sor, but Sawlaman wasna made by my apprentice!" Another day the golfer would recount the story of his play at a fateful hole, and of the narrow margin by which a fine long shot failed to clear the hazard. It was a moving theme, and after a moment of silence the maker of clubs would say in summary, "Ay, ay, sir; it was a pity ye no had Sawlaman in yer bag!" Yes, it was Solomon that was wanted, just Solomon.

Then one day the player fell to temptation again, and, stirred as of yore by his foolish hopes, he resolved that he would pluck Solomon from the stronghold of his fancy. It was a desperate thing to do, a mad and a reckless thing, a defiance of the spirit world of golf. He told the clubmaker of his resolve, and begged that he would give his closest attention to the details of the commission and his personal care to the execution thereof. The clubmaker, good human man, was afraid. Awe-stricken, he said, "Ye'll no have ma try to make Sawlaman—a real Sawlaman, sir. I couldna do it! I couldna do it! I canna make a Sawlaman!" But the player had steeled himself to his resolve; and so for days and days old Sandy laboured in his shop, and head after head was shaped and rejected, and stick after stick was shaved and thrown away. It was a weary task. Then the golfer went away for a stay at another links, and a month later he returned, and on passing Sandy's shop he was beckoned in. "Yes, yes, Sandy! Got him? Got him?" In Sandy's face there was written a look that was half of dis-

appointment and half of pride. He whispered, "Not Sawlaman, sir, not Sawlaman; he'll never be seen on the links this life. But I've got David, and here he is!" And David, with a black varnished head, most beautifully shaped, a fine greeny hickory shaft scared on, and a feel and a balance when handled, and a lie to the ball that spoke well for power and clean hitting. The golfer fondled the club for a while, for he was pleased with it, but he could see, despite his pleasure, that it was no Solomon and that the great ideal had not been realised, and he knew now that it never could be realised; for while he was conscious that this club was wanting in some of the points that made Solomon so great, his imagination failed him to discover them. It was a grand club, but it killed a great hope; and there was something of sadness in the manner of taking it over. "Never mind, Sandy," said he. "It was a fine try, a very fine try; and I'll tell you what we will do. We shall never see Solomon, the real Solomon; but let us have something to remind us of him, and then we will never talk of him, the real one, again. We will call this one, not David, but Solomon. He shall be the Solomon," and so he is to this day, and in his name he marks the renunciation of that great ideal. And some very fine things he has done, for he is a most worthy club.

IV

The 1st of September is a fine date for the golfer, for it seems to mark for him the beginning of the period of play which is the best of the whole year. The summer heats are cooling, the tints of Nature

are turning to beautiful golds and browns and crimsons, and with a little rain the turf begins to yield more to the foot and the club, and play is pleasanter than it was in the dog days. We would have no sorrows to mar the pleasure of such a day; but the golfer need only be braced to skill and worthiness by the reminder that this date has a little black edge round it in his calendar, for on that day there died one who was certainly one of the greatest golfers who ever lived. That was Allan Robertson.

It will always be a difficult matter to compare the golfers of a living generation with those of a dead one, or to estimate the relative quality of the golfers of two different generations, both of them of the long distant past. We have no standards that are carried on from decade to decade and century to century, and while men do not change, their implements do, and the courses on which they play, while, what with the alterations in implements and courses, the methods are much changed, so that it is quite the same game no longer. Therefore it is impossible and futile to make any comparison between the man we have to-day and whom we like to think is the greatest golfer who ever handled a club, and some of the great heroes of the past. That is a question that can never be settled. What we do know, and we can think it for our modern satisfaction, is that there are of necessity many more fine players in these days than ever there were before, and there are dozens for every one that there was in the days of Allan Robertson and young Tom Morris. Therefore it must be much harder to assert supremacy in these days than formerly, and all the greater is the feat of doing it not once, but many times. If some of the

old golfers triumphed as often, or nearly, we can say for the men who live in our time, that, in the numerical weight of their conquest at all events, theirs are by far the greater achievements, and they must have that credit.

As in all other matters, it happens that estimates of the merits of things of the past are necessarily indefinite; they vary from time to time. One generation will have it this old-time celebrity was the greatest in his line; while the sons of that generation make hero-worship of another master, and say that he was the best. So it is in golf. One time there will be a feeling that young Tom was incomparably the best of the golfers of the early period of the game. Then by and by a little of this enthusiasm will fade, and it will be agreed that there was no one better than Allan Robertson. Sometimes a wave of feeling will roll over these discussions in favour of good old Tom, and of late years poor Bob Ferguson has been having justice done to the magnificent skill that he displayed when he was in his prime. Now, taking a mental vote from all the authorities one can remember to have spoken or written on these weighty matters, it seems to result in Allan and young Tom coming out at the top. Bob Ferguson is too near our time for his merits to be properly appraised. Our grandchildren may better be able to give his due to the man who won three championships in succession, and tied for a fourth.

But there can be no doubt that Allan was a really great player in every way. Like Bob Ferguson, and like Harry Vardon in our own day, the beauty of his achievement lay largely in the concealment of his effort, and this is the perfection of style. It has been

handed down to us as indisputable, that the easiness of his style was its most remarkable feature, and that he never, never seemed to hit hard at the ball. His swing was a long but a gentle one, and his clubs were light. He was the first man to cultivate in its perfection that fine cleek play from long range up to the hole that in our day has been accomplished with such magnificent effect by Vardon. The 79 that he did at St. Andrews in 1858—he was then just turned forty-three years of age, having been born in the year of Waterloo—was then and for a long time later regarded as a most superlative achievement. That time he was out in 40 and home in 39, winding up with a 4 and a 3. That great things could be and were done in those days, even reckoning their merit on the most exacting modern standard, may be realised from the circumstance that, taking the best scores at each hole in all Allan's rounds on the old course, which he kept, and making up a composite round from them, that round works out to the strange total of 56,—out in 27 and home in 29. In this strong essence of Robertsonian golf the ingredients, in the order of the eighteen, are, 3 3 3 3 4 4 3 1 3 to the turn, and 3 2 3 4 4 3 3 4 3 on the way back.

Allan was a great golfer, and a fine exemplar in every respect, for he was a great-hearted player who never knew when he was beaten, was always cheery and with a smile, and he possessed the very perfection of a golfing temperament, as most, though not all, great players do. That was why everybody found it such a delight to play with him, and why he and old Tom, who had also a fine temperament, were as a foursome pair just as strong and invincible as men could be imagined to be. That lionlike finish of

theirs to their historic match with the Dunns deserves all the celebrity it has achieved, and will for ever hold, not so much because it was an exciting thing and a great match, but because it was a triumph of the golf temperament over another that was not quite so good. Allan had the spirit of the game within him; he had the true soul of a golfer, and his most casual utterances constantly indicated how he saw right through to the back side of the game. "It's aye fechtin' against ye" was a common observation of his, and there is only too much truth in that simple remark, that the game is hardly ever with you, that it is fighting against you the whole way round. He had no greater admirer than his famous pupil. An "awfu' good player" was Allan to Tom. "Puir Allan!" soliloquised Tom once, when his old master was no more. "The cunningest bit body o' a player, I dae think, that iver haun'led cleek an' putter. An' a kindly body, tae, as it weel does fit me to say, an' wi' a wealth o' slee pawky fun aboot him."

"They may toll the bells and shut up their shops at St. Andrews, for their greatest is gone," somebody said when he died. He had golfed all his life from the time when he first knew that he was alive. His father and grandfather were golfers, and the first things that he played with as a child were golf clubs that were made for him.

V

Surely we must account old Tom Morris as one of the wonders of the sporting world, as he is indubitably in that relation to the world of golf. How many times

have we heard that the light of that long and happy life was flickering towards its extinction, but the rumour has no sooner been spread than Tom comes forward in some activity to give it full denial. Long may he continue to do so; every time that we hear he is sick upon his bed may a telegram come to us from St. Andrews to say that again he is sitting in the chair outside his shop, watching the couples as they come forward in their turn to hole out on that beloved eighteenth putting green, which, with the clubhouse of the Royal and Ancient beyond it, has during recent times comprised almost the entire circle of his daily vision. Each time I go to St. Andrews I find him still cheery, and indeed it seems to me a little cheerier than the last time that I saw him taking the sun in his chair. There is the cheery respectful greeting and the felicitous remark that it is "a gran' day for a roond," and in the next moment he turns his head to mutter a grumble towards those "boys," who are idling away a few spare minutes outside Forgan's shop, and are giving evidence of the freshness of the life that is in them, to which Tom, a stickler for decorum in all connected with golf, however humbly or indirectly, demurs. Like most others who are running up the score of their life's round towards the ninety mark, he is prone to tell you that times have much changed, and that the boys were more sedate in the days when he was one of them. That is as it may be. But despite all the antics of the boys, and the little irritations that they give to old Tom, he remains a cheery Tom to the last, just as he has always been. His life throughout has been imbued with an optimism which has always been the most attractive feature of his character. Every good golfer

is an optimist. I deny that it is possible to be a good golfer in the best sense and not be an out-and-out optimist.

Another fine thing about Tom, and one that has always endeared him to the golfing world, is the fact that there has never been anything in the least niggardly in the gratitude which he extends towards the game with which his life has been bound up. Suggest to Tom that there is anything better in life than golf, and you have done the first thing towards raising up a barrier of reserve between him and you. Listen to how he spoke of the game of his heart on a New Year's Day twenty-one years back from now, when even then he was by way of becoming an old man. "An' it hadna been for gowff," he said to the patron who greeted him in the customary form for the first day of the year, "I'm no sure that at this day, sir, I wad hae been a leevin' man. I've had ma troubles an' ma trials, like the lave; an' whiles I thocht they wad hae clean wauved me, sae that to 'lay me doun an' dee'—as the song says—lookit about a' that was left in life for puir Tam. It was like as if ma vera sowle was a'thegither gane oot o' me. But there's naething like a ticht gude gowing mautch to soop yer brain clear o' that kin' o' thing; and wi' the help o' ma God an' o' gowff, I've aye gotten warsled through somehow or ither. The tae thing ta'en wi' the tither, I haena had an ill time o't. I dinna mind that iver I had an unpleasant word frae ony o' the many gentlemen I've played wi'. I've aye tried—as ma business was, sir—to mak' masel' pleesant to them; an' they've aye been awfu' pleesant to me. An' noo, sir, to end a long and maybe a silly crack—bein' maistly about masel'—ye'll just come wi' me, an' ye'll

hae a glass o' gude brandy, and I'll have ma pint o' black strap, an' we'll drink a gude New Year to ane anither, an' the like to a' gude gowffers."

Sportsman, in the best sense, Tom has always been, and he was a worthy predecessor of the men who are to-day at the head of the ranks of the professional golfers. That is a pretty story that is told of Captain Broughton's challenge to Tom to hole a putt for £50. As everybody knows, Tom was once famous as the man who missed the very shortest putts, to whom there was duly delivered, when he was at Prestwick, a letter which was addressed only to the "Misser of Short Putts, Prestwick." On the occasion under notice Tom was playing to the High Hole on the old course at St. Andrews, and had got into sore trouble, so that he was playing two or three more when Captain Broughton happened to pass by and became a witness of what was happening. Tom, be it noted, always belonged to golfers of that fine and sportmanlike persistency, who would never give up a hole while there was a single spark of hope remaining alight. "Oh, pick up your ball, Tom, it's no use!" said the Captain half chidingly. "Na, na," answered Tom, "I might hole it!" "If you do I'll give you £50," retorted the Captain, and it seemed a very safe retort too. "Done!" responded Tom, and thereupon made one more stroke with his iron club, and lo! the ball hopped on to the green, and glided on and on towards the hole, hesitated as it came nearer to it, curled round towards it, crept nearer and nearer until it was on the lip—and down! He had holed! Then said the triumphant Tom, "That will make a nice little nest-egg for me to put in the bank," and the Captain looked very serious and went his way. A few days later the

Captain came along with the £50, and with a smile and a compliment offered it to Tom as the fruits of his achievement; but Tom declined absolutely to take a penny of it. "I thank ye, Captain, and I'm grateful to ye all the same; but I canna tak' the money, because, ye see, ye wisna really meaning it, and it wisna a real wager." And to that he stuck.

VI

There are alarms and excursions in the ball business daily, and the player takes a devoted interest in them all. The trade is striving with might and main to put ten yards on to the drive of little Tomkins, and poor old grandfather, who began his golf at sixty, may think as he goes off to sleep at night that perhaps by the morning there will be a new ball on the market which will enable him to get his handicap down to 20. The good inventors are doing all that they can for him. They are trying everything and each thing in all possible different ways. The other day a great professional was taking stock of his shop, and he found that he had twenty-seven different varieties of rubber-cored balls in hand. And many golfers feel that they must try them all and each new one as it comes out. The evolution of the golf ball is one of the most wonderful things of its kind. All of us who have played golf for more than five years can plume ourselves on the fact that we lived in golf in the earlier era of the gutta; it is strange to think that possibly half of the present golfing population cannot say that, so quickly has the game been coming on of late. But not one golfer in five thousand of those

living now played in the days of the feather-stuffed ball, which was the pioneer. It had the game to itself up to 1848, which was the year that the gutta came in. St. Andrews was the great centre of manufacture of the "featheries," and in the shop of Allan Robertson alone there were some three thousand a year made. Of course three thousand rubber-cores would be nothing in these days, but making a ball was a big job then, and they were expensive, costing about four shillings each. And a single topped shot with an iron finished them absolutely! The ball-makers bought the little leather cases ready made from the St. Andrews saddlers, a small hole being left to stuff the feathers in. The feathers were boiled, and it took a large hatful to stuff a ball tight with them. Mr. Campbell of Saddell is believed to have taken the first gutta balls to St. Andrews, and when he did so there was consternation everywhere. They thought the trade in the featheries would be ruined, and that anyone could make the new balls. So an attempt was made to boycott them, and it is even said that Allan Robertson bought up all the lost balls that were found in the whins and destroyed them by fire! Tom Morris was working in his shop then, and they quarrelled so violently the first day when Tom used a gutta that they parted for ever. Tom himself tells the story in this way: "I can remember the circumstances well. Allan could not reconcile himself at first to the new ball at all, just in the same way as Mr. John Low and many other golfers could not take to the Haskell when it first appeared. But the gutta became the fashion very quickly, as the rubber-cored ball has done, so what could we do? One day, and it is one that will always

be clearly stamped on my memory, I had been out playing golf with a Mr. Campbell of Saddell, and I had the misfortune to lose all my supply of balls, which were, you can well understand, very much easier lost in those days, as the fairway of the course was ever so much narrower then than it is now, and had thick, bushy whins close in at the side. But never mind that. I had, as I said, run short of balls, and Mr. Campbell kindly gave me a gutta one to try. I took to it at once, and as we were playing in, it so happened that we met Allan Robertson coming out, and someone told him that I was playing a very good game with one of the new gutta balls, and I could see fine, from the expression of his face, that he did not like it at all, and when we met afterwards in his shop, we had some high words about the matter, and there and then we parted company, I leaving his employment. There are two big bushes out there in Allan's old garden. Well, one of them was planted by him and the other by me, just about that same time, so they cannot be young bushes now." But by 1850 the guttas were in general use and nobody was much the worse.

It is odd to reflect that golfers were very near the rubber core several times during the fifty-four years that the gutta held office. As we were told in the big law case, an old lady made balls that were wound with rubber thread to make them bounce more; but, nearer to our rubber-core, there were two golfers who at different times and places are said to have made what was to all intents and purposes just the same ball in principle that we use to-day, but not so thoroughly made and perfected. One of these golfers used to make them and give them to his

friends. But there was no advertising and not so much enterprise in the way of companies with big capital in those days, and these inventors let their chance go by. What a chance! There were millions, and millions again, in their idea.

None the less the Americans deserve the credit for being the men who gave us the rubber-cored ball as we know it. But for their belief in it, and their enterprise, there would have been no rubber-cores to-day, and perhaps far fewer golfers. Let me tell the real story of how they came by their idea and their determination. In the early summer of 1898, Mr. Coburn Haskell was the guest of Mr. Wirk, one of the magnates of the American rubber industry, at his house in Cleveland, Ohio, and both being golfers, they golfed all day and talked golf during dinner and afterwards. It was these dinner conversations that brought about the Haskell ball, revolutionised the game, and made an industry which is the most thriving of all connected with sport. Both gentlemen agreed that they wanted a better ball than the gutta, something that would go farther. At last, after many sittings, one of them observed that something might be done by winding rubber under tension. Winding it without such tension would result in the ball being too soft. This idea was elaborated during the next night or two, and then Mr. Wirk hurried away to his factory, obtained some rubber strands, and he and Mr. Haskell spent nearly a day in winding, by their own hands and in secret, the first ball of the new era. They covered it with gutta-percha and gave it to a professional to try, without informing him of the nature of what he was trying. They watched anxiously for the result, and

with the very first shot that the man had with it he carried a bunker that had never been carried before, beating the best drive that had ever been made on that course by many yards. Then the two makers smiled happily at each other. They knew that they were "on a good thing." It took more than two years to invent a machine to do the winding, and some time longer to perfect the process. Then the Haskell killed the gutta in a season. Before that Britain supplied America with all her balls. Afterwards she sent none; but the makers of the Haskell bought 30,000 dozen that had been sent over, for the sake of the gutta-percha of which they were made, and at the bare price of that material.

In the first five months of 1903 the American people shipped 40,000 dozen of their balls to this country. So were the tables turned. Now they ship very few indeed, as we make our balls ourselves. Instead, they are threatening American golfers as to what will happen if they catch them playing on American courses with British balls. Of the little ball that was thought out over the dinner table in Ohio on those hot summer evenings there are now half a million used in a week in the busy season on British courses, and some fifteen millions, at a cost of about a million pounds, in the course of the season!

But yet not one man in a thousand who looks upon his beautiful white rubber core when it is new knows what and how much is inside it. In one ball there are 192 yards of thread, the whole of which is stretched to eight times its original length, so that, as it is in the ball, there are 1536 yards of it—nearly a mile. This thread has to be wound round something. It has commonly been wound round a tiny

piece of wood ; now, in the case of some balls, it is being wound round little bags of gelatine and things like that. Some people are under the delusion that in the case of such balls the whole centre is gelatine, and that there is no rubber.

VII

The man who has the courage to enter upon a medal round or a match with a keen opponent and play with a cheap, or cheaper, ball, is a rarity, and an admirable one. Faith goes for a long way in these matters. Give a man the most expensive ball on the market to play with, and he feels that he has got something which will do justice to his capabilities, and occasionally let him off with light penalties for some of his errors. Let him have a cheap ball and he is uneasy, with the idea that nothing is likely to go right for him. When he has faith in his ball—his expensive ball—he plays accordingly, that is to say, he plays with confidence, and the probabilities are, of course, that in such case he will play better than he would otherwise do, especially if he makes a good start. If he has not so much faith in his ball—because it is cheap—he will not play so well, because he will play without confidence. This is really a truism which is emphasised over and over again on the links every day. As this player cannot test his balls accurately and show for a certainty which one is better than others, he has naturally faith in the more expensive, because it ought to be better, whether it is or not. So one comes quite logically to the conclusion that

the most expensive balls are the best. Now suppose that the makers of any of our leading brands of florin balls were at this stage to reduce the price of their specialities to a shilling each. What would be the attitude of these golfers to that ball? They would say to themselves, or suspect, that these makers were taking something out of the quality of their wares, and if they suspected that, they would almost certainly find innumerable happenings in their next match, which in their opinion would give the utmost possible support to their theory. Every drive that fell short of the proper standard would be put down to the makers of the ball; this really very funny golfer would shake his head and say that it was a great pity, and so forth, but that he would have to give up this shilling ball, of which at two shillings he was so very fond. And he would do it. But all the time there may not be a particle of difference between the old two-shilling ball and the new shilling one.

Once again one is tempted to the fancy that there is a good future for a reasonably good ball to be sold at five shillings. It would not be a popular ball, because there is a large proportion of players to whom this one would at last be too expensive; but all who could afford to play with it by making some little sacrifice, such as by cycling to the links instead of going by train, by carrying their own clubs two or three times a week instead of employing a caddie, or, simpler still, by reducing the weekly or monthly allowance for domestic purposes to the lady of the household because of the hard times, would certainly do so. And as the rich golfers would play with it also, it would have

a good sale, and if it cost no more to make than the florin balls it would be very profitable to the manufacturers. All the ordinary golfers would play well with it. They would feel that they had the very best, that at last they could do themselves justice. They would have confidence. Queer world this of golf!

VIII

"The course is black with parsons," was said one fine Monday at the outset of his game by a man who had been kept waiting for a most unconscionable time while a minor canon and a plain vicar had been worrying away in bunkers on opposite sides of the first short hole. In this observation there was some evident exaggeration, but it is being borne in upon us every day how more and more popular is this diversion becoming with the cloth, as indeed it should and might be expected to be, since golf makes its greatest appeal to those of the most thoughtful and philosophical temperaments, such as clergymen should possess. Excellent is this association, and it is a poor and threadbare humour that is constantly fancying the cleric in such exasperation with his game that ordinary modes of expression are insufficient for him. Having heard of the worthy divine who was horribly bunkered and in a heel-mark at the Redan at North Berwick, to whom the most excellent of caddies, "big" Crawford observed, "Noo, gin an aith wad relieve ye, dinna mind me"; and of the other one who was reported as repeating the Athanasian Creed at the bottom of "Hell"—the bunker of that name on the

St. Andrews course—one would wish to go no farther with such stories. The celebrated Bishop Potter of New York was playing golf on the course at Saranac, and he made a mighty attempted drive that topped the ball, and another one that tore up the turf, and yet a third that almost missed the ball, and each time he uttered a soothing “Sh-sh-sh-sh-sh!” But the caddie was himself a golfer of a very stern and human school, and in his great annoyance he exclaimed, “Man alive! sh-sh-sh-sh won’t send that ball where you want it to go to!” The Rev. Silvester Horne, who is one of the keenest of the clerical golfers, and has been known to captain a side of parsons occasionally, once drew up a system of conduct to be observed by brother clergymen when playing the game, and a very excellent system it was, with severe adjurations against the doing of many things such as are common with the ordinary golfer, and certain small licences permitted to make the path a trifle less difficult than it might otherwise be.

There was a worthy rector who was given to golf, and was somewhat sensitive upon the subject of the large scores that were made by his foozling. He had a pretty way; he did not count his score himself, though who knows what subconscious ideas he may or may not have formed as to its dimensions? But be that as it may, he would say to his caddie as at last he flopped the ball on to the green at the short hole, “Now, my boy, how many have I played this time?” The caddie, being official counter to the rector, would say at once, “Six, sir!” Then the reverend gentleman would stop suddenly in his march forwards, and would turn upon this

miserable little boy with a severe and awful frown, and would say, or almost shriek, "Six! six! six! Whatever are you saying, my boy? Have you been watching the game? Do you really mean six?" The caddie was utterly cowed. "N—n—no, sir," he would stammer, "I'm very sorry; I m—m—mean five!" "Ha! That is better," his reverence smiled. "Yes, no doubt it is five; five, certainly. Let it be five. But"—and this very seriously—"my boy, it is of the greatest importance to count the strokes correctly at this game, and let this be a warning to you. Take great care with the counting." And yet it was six.

But, tell us, why is it that the clergyman, with all his magnificent opportunities, is so seldom anything like a good player, so often has a handicap deep down in the teens? You may see him on the links six days a week, and yet he goes on from year to year no nearer to the degree of scratch, still driving his short and very wayward ball with that nervous, fearful stance of his, that slow, hesitating swing. I can almost tell the clergyman on the tee, however he may be disguised, he is such a doubter. Yet, with his opportunities, the Church ought to be by way of finding a candidate for the championship. Can it be that the philosophical temperament in excess kills keenness and makes a man content in his own little kingdom of fozzling and shortness—

"Contented if he might enjoy
The things that others understand."

There can be no other explanation. But it is to be set down perhaps to the clergyman's credit that

he is so often unorthodox in his methods. On the links he is the broadest-minded man alive, and he is tolerant of all things. Why, if ever in London one wants to be reminded of just the way in which the Barry swing is done, one might seek out none other than the Bishop of London, for if ever a man performs that fall-back, bent-kneed swipe it is Dr. Ingram, as photographs will prove. If this is to be, then an archbishop might play no stymies, and how then shall a curate become a champion?

IX

We have not that form and ceremony in the management of our golf clubs that our ancestors had, nor is there so much idea and sentiment employed. Golf in these days seems often to be regarded too much as a work-a-day affair, so that at few places besides St. Andrews is there any real preservation of the old feeling. Else, the true spirit dominating, why should there not still be chaplains to all the old-established golf clubs? How much the chaplain counted for in the great golfing days of old may be gathered from the minute of the Honourable Company which they made when settling an appointment to the office. The club then had its home at Leith, the date being 1764, and it was entered in the book—"The Captain and Council, taking into their serious consideration the deplorable situation of the Company in wanting a godly and pious Chaplain, they did intreat the Reverend Doctor John Dun, Chaplain to the Right Honourable the Earl of Galloway, to accept the office of being

Chaplain to the Golfers; which desire the said Doctor, out of his great regard to the Glory of God and the good of the Souls of the said Company, was Religiously pleased to comply with. Therefore the Company and Council Did and Do hereby nominate, present, and appoint the said Rev. Doctor John Dun to be their Chaplain accordingly. The said Reverend Doctor did accept of the Chaplaincy, and in token thereof said Grace after dinner." Whether the general company of golfers is at present in as "deplorable situation" as the Honourable Company was at this time, is a nice point which need not be inquired into.

X

In a day when the young school of golfers is making such a determined advance it is often difficult to make distinctions of merit and to determine who are the most promising and who will most probably become the really great golfers of the future. We are a little too much inclined to get into the way of saying that this man is likely to be an amateur champion of the future, and that that player is almost a certainty for the high honours of the game. When people talk in this irresponsible fashion they forget several things—that competition now is many times keener than it was in the days when the Balls and the Taits and the Hiltons first became champions, and when it was quite safe to prophesy beforehand that they would be, and that in the future it will be keener still; that there is more luck than ever in the game and in the selection of champions,

and that if the honour is to be denied to such a fine player as Mr. John Graham, who has forgotten more about the game than some of the younger school know, nobody should say that others are likely to be champions; and that because a man does some fine golf for a week or two it does not follow that he is a fine golfer.

The game no doubt is easier now than it used to be, and it is more difficult for fine distinctions in merit between players to be reproduced in the balance of holes; but still in the long run knowledge and skill will tell, and those men of the younger school who are deeply thoughtful and scientific golfers will in the end separate themselves from those of their rivals whose methods are more of the slap-dash order. With all the advance of the young school, and its scores of men with high plus handicaps, each of whom is declared to be good enough to win the championship if it finds him on his day, one would seriously hesitate to suggest that there are more than five or six young players at the present time who show any promise at all of becoming as good golfers as Ball and Hilton and Laidlay have been. The remainder may be only the veriest trifle their inferiors, and the difference may be so small that it may constantly be not indicated in the results of competitions, or it may even show a balance to the credit of the players whom we are regarding as the inferior ones. But in the long run the minority, who know more about the game, will triumph, and will be separated from the general ruck. With all the talk that there has been about the levelling up of the players as the result of the rubber-cored ball, depend upon it that in twenty years from now we shall still

have a high table in golf, at which will sit the acknowledged masters of the game, just as some of those whose names we have mentioned have sat at this table for the past decade or two.

XI

Perhaps it would be as well for the golf of some of us if now and again a time of quiet and inactive thought were enforced. It is certain that many men feel much the better in their game for having been deprived of play for a time, greatly irritated as they have been. The fact is that he who is a faithful golfer often plays it mentally when real shots on the links are denied to him. It turns out that this mental golf is of a very thorough order; never is the player so analytical and severely critical of his methods as then, and never does he grope more patiently or more intelligently for the hidden light that is the source of success. It is simple fact that men have discovered grave faults in their play in this way, such as they never suspected during the whole season that they had been committing them in real play on the links. And in the same way others have come upon great secrets of fine details of method, making for the improvement of their game, which they would never have encountered at golf on a course.

The chief, if not the only reason, and one that is quite good enough to be convincing, for this somewhat peculiar state of affairs is, that this is essentially practice and experimental golf, in which the player is constantly wondering and trying something new; while the golf that he plays with clubs and balls on

the green grass is far too often exclusively match-play or score-play golf, and that is regarded at the time as too responsible a thing to permit of any experiment. The old ways may be bad ways, and no doubt many of them are; but we must stand by them on occasions of this kind, we say to ourselves, when the wise precept of an old player-friend flashes across our mind, the opponent being one up with three to go, and a very vindictive fellow. It is evident, then, that we do too much of this match and score play, and that the consequence is that we are never given time and the opportunity for thought and practice and the working out of experiments and ideas that might prove of the utmost moment. Our game runs along a little old-constructed channel, and it gets clogged with fault. When we go out to golf for the day, no other possibility presents itself to our minds than that of the two rounds, one before luncheon, and the other one after, with living opponent or opponents, and always upon such occasions we must trust to the old ways to pull us through. How much would it make for future improvement if one of the rounds, or a long afternoon, were devoted to simple lonely practice with one club, or at most two, in which new ideas might be tried, theories considered, and different and perhaps more effective ways to salvation worked out. Spend an hour thus in close communion with one's cleek or iron, and what an intimacy is established that never would have been otherwise! There used to be suspicion, distrustfulness, fear, and neglect — and what may follow upon such relations save utter failure? — but now there is friendship, and an appreciation of capabilities and qualities that bodes

ill for the arrogance of the opponent who has seen so many failures with this cleek or iron, that he has come to think that when it is unbagged it is time for him to be adding one more hole to his score. The man who never does any of this practice golf never gives himself a chance of learning how to play more than one stroke with one club, and when there is only one stroke to a club it is not generally a very good or very reliable stroke, as can easily be shown.

Thinking thus, we perceive the value of influenza and the minor illnesses, and come to realise the truth of the remark by one earnest golfer, that the thing that of all others had most improved his game of golf was a severe attack of typhoid fever, which all but summarily terminated his career. When this man told us that he emerged from that disquieting experience a new and better golfer, and one more thorough, the observation seemed cryptic to the point of absurdity, and it was not taken very seriously. But it is certainly true that a very earnest golfer will think long and hard upon all points of his game during a dull period of enforced rest and idleness such as comes at sickness, and then all the sins of omission and commission loom up in his troubled mind, and he corrects the faults that he knows now, as probably he would not admit before, went to the undoing of his game. The entire position is revised; in the early days of convalescence we send downstairs to the study for some favourite volumes, and we look up Vardon, Braid, or Taylor on a subtle point of which we have been making mental examination. The thoughtful studies of Mr. John Low are a stimulant at such times. Such introspection is a fine thing and most fruitful, and little

wonder after all that the player does indeed return to health a wiser and a more complete golfer, who will now go farther in skill upon the links than ever he would have done in the old, narrow, careless days.

What follows is a story that bears somewhat upon the moral that we have been thinking over. There was a man who was in want of a shot that would come between the driving iron and the wood, and he could not find one. Of the cleek he had no good word to say; he could not play it. Of driving mashies he had several, and some of them were well enough at times, and at others they were like the cleek, so that what with his driving mashies and his cleeks, this man was in constant jeopardy when there was a shot of a hundred and sixty or seventy yards to play, and so he was unhappy in his game. It happened that one of his driving mashies was one that had been gifted to him upon a day by a great player, who said, "I pick this from all that I have seen; may I never play more if it is not a perfect club!" The man tried it, and it seemed to him that the head wanted more ballast, and after a little while he allowed the club to be gathered to his fine collection of idle relics, saying to himself consolingly, "What suits one man does not suit another." Thus it came to pass that the perfect club that a champion player declared he would love to play a long-short hole with to save the life of himself or his dearest friend, lay for months and years in a dark cupboard.

In the even cycle of this golfer's life the time of torment came round once again, and, as it had seemed before, it was more desperate than it had ever been. There appeared to be no remedy. All the tricks had been tried, and all the clubs generally put into

commission had been experimented with, and there was no good result. And then a strange thing happened. Things were at about their worst, when, as sometimes was the case, this poor tormented golfer awoke in his bed very early one morning in summer. The sun had not long broken the darkness; it was about three o'clock. Being a man who went to bed betimes and who was early refreshed, he did this time, as on others, lie in long thought upon the events of life and his own affairs, the perfect stillness of the time conducing to effective contemplation. And, as was inevitable, the chain of reflection brought him round to the prevailing worry of the game, and for half an hour or so he considered this grave problem from every conceivable point of view, and subjected each iron instrument that was concerned with it to the severest cross-examination, from which none emerged with an unspotted reputation. It is not always in the human golfer to attach entire blame to flesh and blood, and wholly exonerate inanimate iron. Pride must have its place, even in the times of adversity. This man was self-assured that one reason for his failure—not the whole reason, perhaps; but still one reason—was that all his searchings and purchasings had yet left him without the club that he really needed, that one which was resting somewhere in a shop or in another man's bag, that was the affinity of his game, the thing that was meant for him and which one day might come his way. He had a vague instinct of what the feel of that club would be like, of the shape of its head, its balance, and the length of the shaft. When he encountered it he would know it at once for the long-sought-for club.

Then, as by a gift of the gods, an idea flashed through his mind and caused him to start up, thoroughly roused from the dreamy state of lethargy. That club! That old despised club that had come to him from the champion with such a glowing recommendation, wasted entirely! That was the club that was wanted; it must have been one of the most irresponsible and illogical moments of his golfing lifetime when it was rejected. Did it not conform to that ideal that was vaguely felt in the mind? As he handled it in imagination now, did it not seem quite perfect, that above all other clubs its true motto was "Far and sure." When a golfer makes discoveries of this kind about his old clubs, that, poor things, cannot speak for themselves and tell him what he is doing wrong, he is man enough to own his previous mistakes, and this player owned them. He was all contrition, repentance, humility. He wished to abase himself before the champion club and promote it to the captaincy of his bag. Therefore when there is no sound to be heard save the chirruping of the birds and the creaking of stairs, see this inspired golfer leave his room, clad in a dressing-gown, at half-past three in the morning, and go forward to the ransacking of a rubbish cupboard in search for the wanted club. And there it was found at last, a little rusty, the marks of privation from golf and of severe neglect written plainly upon its face, but sure enough that same grand club that had lived in the remembrance until at last it was appreciated. Yes, it was just as it had been imagined to be. It was the perfect club; it would do what all others had failed to do. Happy club in which there is placed such belief and confidence, for the less likely is it ever

to disappoint! In his mood of repentance the man gets a little emery and brightens up the blade until the first shafts of the morning sunlight glint upon it. Being a handy man with a tool or two, he takes out the tack at the end of the grip and unwinds it, laying it back again in some way to suit the fancy of the time. And then the grip is waxed, and the club is ready, and it is laid to a ball on the hearth-rug, and how that ball could be hit, with a fine, low, skimming flight that would yield much length, and the stroke, having been something of a push, would dump the ball at the end of it just down beside the flag! It is no use. Let it be four o'clock or twelve, why should the conventions keep us off the links when these exalted moods are upon us? The golfer hurries through a bath, puts his clothes about him, and with the whole world of golf save this one unit still asleep, even unto the most watchful greenkeeper, he hurries down to the course with a few balls and just this one club, this one fine club. And there the truth of it all is realised. It is the club that was wanted, and the shots that come from it are just as perfect as shots by this man will ever be. The balls are fired off up to the first green one by one, and it is found then that such are the virtues of this club of exquisite balance that it is a splendid thing to putt with!

It is a glorious morning. The pearly sky seems to speak well of weather prospects for the day when it opens out, and there is not wind enough to curl a wavelet on the sea, which simply makes a little soothing creamy lapping on the pebbles. How grand is the fine expanse of the course in this morning freshness, and is there not something of rugged beauty in that huge sandy projection which marks the short hole

far out? This indeed is the time of day for the golfer to be abroad. Happy man who is in this mood, having found that which was lost. The golfing life is not the same. A little thought and much confidence, and see to what they will carry you! Make the most of them, you happy fellow, for they may not last —they may not last!

THE QUEER SIDE

I

PROBABLY it is true that golf carries its votaries farther in enthusiasm than does any other game or sport. It is characteristic of the golfing enthusiasm that it does but increase as time goes on, and that not in the case of one man in twenty does it show any diminution, while the game is such a jealous mistress that it is rarely the convert to golf maintains any regular association with other sports unless he is of such complete leisure that it is impossible for golf alone to fill up his hours. Practically every golfer, therefore, is a keen enthusiast, and though we dislike to hear the phrase come from the lips of those who are not of us, we have to confess that there is some justification for the extremity of this enthusiasm being described as "golf fever"; for indeed at times it provokes the player to the doing of many things which in the cold light of reason afterwards would not be regarded as completely rational. We are all enthusiasts; but who was the greatest enthusiast who ever was? An impossible question to answer, of course, if for no other reason than that the limit appears to have been reached by hundreds; but tradition can always settle matters of this kind in its own way, and it has determined for us who was the

keenest golfer, and has seen to it, moreover, that his memory shall be safely perpetuated. Thus we have old Alexander M'Kellar as the patron saint of the man who likes to get his three and four rounds a day in the summer-time, and is miserable unless he has a club in his hand in his resting hours.

It is something to have become regarded as the keenest golfer, for it goes without saying that every other worldly consideration of every description whatsoever must have been sacrificed to the attainment of that vast distinction. Such a man must have really earned the title of "Cock o' the Green," which was given to M'Kellar, and with that title his fame will be handed down through the generations as it is affixed to an historic print. This picture of the old worthy, who indeed was fairly "mad" on the game, was first circulated more than a hundred years ago, and has become one of our most cherished golfing antiquities. His enthusiasm brimmed over when in the act of play, and "By the la' Harry, this shall not go for nothing!" as he used to say involuntarily when addressing the ball, became something of a catch-phrase in his district. He did his golf from Edinburgh, and Bruntsfield Links was his playing ground. How often does one find that they are the keenest golfers who do not take up the game in their youth? It may be true that generally the man who does not swing a club as a child has not such a good chance of becoming a player with pretensions to championship form as have those who made such early acquaintance with the game; but do we not find that these men become the fondest and most thorough players, making up in enthusiasm and real enjoyment what they lack in skill? Thus there is a

grand compensation after all, and let us weep no more for the golf that we missed in our schooldays; for some of those who played it then are they who now find their greatest ease of heart for some weeks of the year at fishing, shooting, or some other sport in which something has to be killed.

And so the "Cock o' the Green" did not begin his golf at all until he was quite a middle-aged man, and all likelihood of his ever becoming a really finished player had completely vanished. And he was of comparatively humble means. He had saved a little money, such as went for some justification for his constant idleness; but his wife found it necessary to keep a tavern in Edinburgh when they went to live there. M'Kellar gave no hand in the management of this tavern; he had no time for anything but golf, and bitter were the upbraidings that he had to endure from his worthy and industrious dame as a consequence. Mrs. M'Kellar may indeed be set down as the first that we know anything about of that long line of sufferers who go by the name of golf-widows. This lady might have borne her isolation better if it had not been the fact that she was somewhat mocked for it, and found the name of her lord a byword in every neighbour's house and at every street corner for his over-indulgence in the game of golf, fair "cracked" on it, as everybody took him to be. She tried to shame him once, but had much the worse of the experiment. She thought to make him a butt for the laughter of his companions by taking to the links one day his dinner and his nightcap. But when she arrived there he was in the throes of a hard-fought match, and when she offered him the meal he answered her kindly, but with some touch of impatience, that

she might wait if she chose until the game was completed, when he would attend to her, but that for the time being he had no leisure for dinner. And the game went on. So she came to loathe the very name of golf, and was scarcely civil to the tavern customers who were players and friends of her good man. But one day she had a sweet revenge upon him. She set out for a journey to Fife, and was expected to be away for at least a day. No sooner was her back turned than hospitable M'Kellar went forth to bid his golfing friends to his house, which, when its lady was in residence, they might in no wise enter. A fine feast was prepared, and the party was a merry one, when the door opened, and there stood, with a countenance drawn with suppressed wrath, Mrs. M'Kellar, who had been obliged to return, through the ferry being impassable as a consequence of the severe weather that prevailed.

Every morning the "Cock o' the Green" hurried through his breakfast, and away he went to Bruntsfield Links with all the haste possible, never returning home again until night had fallen. Sometimes, indeed, he did not come then, if there were any good golfing excuse for not doing so. Many were the times when he was discovered playing at the short holes by the dim glimmer of a lamp, and a moonlight night was an almost irresistible temptation to him. Heat and cold did not diminish his ardour; and in the winter, when the snow covered the course, he would do his utmost to persuade an opponent to share a round with him; and if he failed he would go out alone and wander the whole way round playing his ball from flag to flag, the greens and holes not being discoverable.

Like all keen golfers he loved the foursome, and preferred to be tested by it if he could find a partner of any quality whatever. One day he was in Leith and fell in conversation with some strangers there, glass-blowers they were, and, as always, the subject turned upon the game, and from the game in general to the prowess of the "Cock o' the Green" in particular. The men of Leith affected to think little of his play, and challenged him to a match, upon which moment a Bruntfield youngster made his appearance. "By gracious, gentlemen!" exclaimed M'Kellar, "here is a boy, and we will play you for a guinea!" The match took place, and victory lay with M'Kellar, who was so excited when the last hole had been played that he ran post haste to the shop of the clubmaker, screaming, "By gracious, gentlemen, the old man and the boy have beat them off the green!"

The artist Kay, who made the picture of him, went out on to the links one day to draw it from the life unbeknown to the hero, and when he came to know about it afterwards he was sorely disappointed that he had not been given the opportunity of posing. "What a pity!" he lamented. "By gracious! If I had but known I would have shown him some of my capers!" Perhaps it was as well he did not. When he won his match he would sometimes be so mad with joy that he would dance round the hole for a minute. Such delight was pure, for though he did wager a little on his matches he did not risk more than he could well afford to lose, and it was the game he tried to win and not the little that he bet. On Sundays, when there was no golf to be played, he fulfilled the duties

of doorkeeper to an Episcopalian church, and held the plate. Douglas Gourlay, the famous ballmaker, one day put a ball into the plate by way of joke, guessing what would happen. He was right, M'Kellar's golfing cupidity was too much for him. His eyes glistened, and in an instant the ball was transferred to his pocket. Poor old M'Kellar! Weak enough he may have been, but he did love his game as absolutely nothing else in life, which for him ended nearly a century since.

II

It is an ancient game; but let no man think yet that we have realised a fair part of the curious situations that may arise on the links when the golfer hits a ball, or that we have a full appreciation of the possibilities of their complexity. Very quaint are some of the difficulties that twice a year are presented to the Rules of Golf Committee sitting at St. Andrews for the special purpose of discovering solutions thereto.

From far Manawatu once there came a plaintive cry for help. These New Zealand golfers confessed that in all the holes on their greens there is an iron box with a small flag on the top to mark the holes. In an inter-club match the caddie of one of the players before leaving the green, when replacing the box, put it into the hole, flag downwards, exposing a sharp point on the top. One of the next two players, when approaching to that hole, landed his ball on the top of the box in the hole, and it remained there. Then the arguments began, and

not until a letter had sailed the seas from the Antipodes, and the Royal and Ancient Club had sent her answer back to this outpost of her empire of golf, did they subside. The man who had executed this wonderful shot had held that he could reverse the box and put it into its proper position and claim the hole. It hurt St. Andrews to think that away there in New Zealand, left to their own resources, they should give themselves up to such queer-fangled contrivances as hole flags with boxes on them. If a bit of cloth and a stick of sorts is good enough for the old course, why should Manawatu want what these Royal and Ancients sarcastically referred to as "mechanical contrivances"? The high authority begged leave to observe that the Rules of Golf did not provide for such "mechanical contrivances," and the New Zealanders were recommended to make local rules to suit them.

You may always tell from the form of the answer when the St. Andrews lip has curled at the question that has been asked of it. Nowadays the committee can hear the mention of a hedge without a rise in its temperature; but when the secretary, in reading out the problem of the moment, has to say "mud" there is uneasiness still. The committee move in their chairs, they fidget, they scowl, somebody mutters "Tut, tut!" and they all cough to hide their agitation. "Mud" is the word you must not say. I have not seen the committee in this agitation; nobody except its own members has, for it is a very private committee; but this sudden disturbance can be imagined most clearly. Yet these inconsiderate golfers will keep on mentioning mud,

and St. Andrews answers them back with as much asperity as is consistent with the preservation of its own dignity. One time in a matter of this kind they gave a snubbing to a Kentish course. The club there, in all seriousness and innocence, propounded a very pretty point. "Playing in a foursome," they said, "A is left by his partner's approach shot a six-inch putt for the hole; but A's ball pitched in a small piece of wet mud left on the edge of the green (presumably from the boot of a player in front). A small piece of this mud clung to the ball, and was on the side of the ball A had to strike. A played the stroke, and the ball and the mud stuck to his putter, and the head of the putter and the ball on it were exactly above the hole." This was surely a most delightful situation! See how pretty is the combination of this foursome pair, and how they do play each the game to suit the other, thus: "His partner then with his putter tapped the ball off A's putter and it fell into the hole." A charming incident! "Did A or his partner lose or halve the hole, and would A have been within his rights in shaking the ball off into the hole, or what should they have done?" Said the Committee to the secretary, "Tell these good people that the Committee have no experience of such tenacious mud, and such a contingency should be provided for by the local rules," and then they hurriedly spoke of the weather and the wind and the state of the eighteenth green, and how the Major got a bonny 3 there the night before—anything to get this taste of Kentish mud out of their St. Andrews mouths.

A point of some curious interest was that which

arose in the course of medal play on the course of the Higher Bebington Club some time ago. A player had one of those most tantalising putts a yard in length to play, and, like many a man before him, he missed it! In his aggravation at the circumstance he snatched back his ball, and, without having holed it out, he replaced it where it was before, in order to try his putt over again, to satisfy his *amour propre* that the holing of such a putt was not beyond his mortal capacity. This is an old way of attempting to gain some small crumb of satisfaction from a very disappointing business. At the second attempt he holed that putt, but his partner then told him that he was obliged to disqualify him from the entire competition for not having holed out when making his putt. The competitor agreed that he had done wrong, and accepted this fate; but some time later, when he had fully thought over the business, and read up the rules, he protested. Yet his committee maintained that he really should be disqualified, and after much argument the seers of the Royal and Ancient were begged to give their decision. And it was a very interesting decision. The high court held that Rule 10 of stroke competitions applied, and that, therefore, if the player replaced his ball directly behind the spot it occupied after he had missed the putt, the penalty was two strokes only, the second putt thus counting as in the competition, though it is fairly clear that the competitor never intended it for it. "But," said the committee, "otherwise he was disqualified." Those who discover feelings and frames of mind behind the mask of simple sentences would be moved to say, in this case, that in that last simple sentence St. Andrews was trying to cover up somewhat the absurd position

to which the rules brought this case; for it was clear that the essence of the problem in relation to the law was as to whether the player replaced his ball behind the spot where it first stopped, which came simply to this—Was he short of the hole the first time, or did his ball run to either side? If he was short, then he was saved, and he is allowed to go on under penalty of two strokes; but if he over-ran the hole—which from the golf point of view was better than to be short—or if he went to either side, then he would be disqualified. That ruling has grown since then.

Pity the club committees in their constant troubles. Was ever committee so sorely beset as that which had come, by devious means, to knowledge of the faults of its members, and when honour seemed to forbid that the knowledge should be acted upon, though otherwise would an injustice be done to the sinless golfers. It was in County Sligo. A medal competition had been played, and when all was over the members of the committee—as such high officers constantly solicitous for the welfare of things will—wandered through the rooms and the corridors of the club. And it came to pass that one of them overheard a conversation that he was not supposed to overhear, between two members of the club, in which it was alleged that certain competitors had played on the putting greens before starting. The committeeman knew then that these men should be disqualified; but how was he to act? He told his colleagues, but they likewise were sore in mind as to whether they were justified in taking notice of the fact that had thus come to their knowledge. Were they bound to investigate this matter, and prove it one way or the other, or was it sufficient if they

waited for someone to lay a formal objection? In their despair they appealed to St. Andrews; but this again is one of the nice points that the chief authority would rather others settled for themselves, and they said accordingly, that the committee must use their own discretion as to whether it was a case for their interference.

Upon other occasions the committee at St. Andrews has been called upon to indicate the proper course of procedure when a ball, after being played, lodged in the turned-up part of a player's trousers. It has been somewhat naïvely asked by Kenmare whether, in a mixed foursome, when the lady missed the ball off the tee, she should "try" again, or whether her gallant partner should rid the tee of that persistent ball. It had to tell the County Down Club that a player could not carry a special flat board round with him from which to make his tee shots; and it has had to straighten out some quite frightful mix-ups in ladies' competitions. Sometimes it happens that some casual decision of this sort serves a good purpose in bringing the portion of the golf world that has been somewhat inclined to wander, back to its duty in the observance of the strict letter of the law, as in the autumn of 1906, when on the appeal of Aldeburgh it declared how, when in long grass or anything of the kind, the player was only entitled to move so much of the obstruction as would enable him to find his ball in the first instance, and was not entitled to arrange things so that he could see it while attempting to play it. A player is not so entitled to a full view of his ball, though he will sometimes tell you that he is.

III

That which was regarded by our ancestors as a most amazing feat, namely, holing with the tee shot, has become exceeding common. One week not long ago it was done in five different parts of the country, and in three other separate weeks there were four cases reported. Why this increase, then, of doing holes in 1? The reason is simple after all. It is not that it is any easier to do the trick than it used to be. Probably it is rather harder, since it is more difficult to flop the rubber-cored ball down plump on the green at the short holes than it used to be in the days of the late lamented gutta, and a good deal harder to make it sink down into the hole as it ought to do when it gets there, instead of running around it and then away, and generally behaving badly. If it were any easier to do than it was formerly, would not the champions be doing it? But they are not. Harry Vardon has still only one hole in 1 to his credit, and while Braid gets his 2's very often, the 1's don't come his way. The simple reason for the frequency is the great increase of golf. Everybody plays golf now and is always playing, and in such circumstances somebody must always be holing in 1, or very nearly. That is the simple fact, and the man who now performs this feat is no longer worthy of a paragraph all to himself in the morning newspaper. He will simply go along with half a dozen others in the weekly list.

Still there is room for distinction in holing in 1 yet, and the men who crave for such notoriety need not despair. If every man can hole in 1, obviously

the proper thing to do is to find some particular way of doing it that every man cannot equal, or at least is not likely to do. For example, J. S. Caird, the Newcastle-on-Tyne professional, was out playing the other day, when in the course of his game he took the fifteenth in 1 in a very strange way. He popped his ball up into the air with his mashie, and down it came plump into the hole, falling clean into the tin and never bouncing out again! Fancy pitching into the hole in 1! Luckily the caddie was standing there and took out the flag in time, and one cannot be surprised that he was so overcome with the strangeness of the thing that happened, that his imagination was fired until he saw something of the supernatural in it, and believed that his eyes had witnessed more than they really had. At all events, to the players and to the people afterwards he described in the most circumstantial and convincing manner how the ball at one time seemed to be flying far past the green, but how when just above him it came to a sudden stop in mid-air and then fell vertically into the hole! Why were we not told the name of this ball?

Another advance on the simple feat of holing in one stroke is to do it twice within a year. The first man to do this was Mr. L. Stuart Anderson, who took the tenth and fifteenth at Balgownie (Aberdeen) in 1 in 1895. Since then I have heard of three other men having done it, one at Fort Anne, another at Bristol, and the third at Tunbridge Wells. Mr. Anderson, by the way, who is now the secretary of the Royal Portrush Club, holds the record for the greatest number of times that one man has done a hole in 1; and here again is another suggestion to the

ambitious one-stroke man. Mr. Anderson has done it seven times. He began by doing it at the expense of his sister, Miss Blanche, at North Berwick, which perhaps did not matter much, as sisters are indulgent, and wound up for the time being by doing it (the seventh at Tavistock) in the presence of and in a match against a parson, which, to say the least, was indelicate. I have heard of a lady who has done this thing four times. Another out-of-the-way feat is to hole in 1 just when you hear that someone else has done so. One April evening, when the course at Heaton Moor had not the appearance of stirring events happening upon it, such as would go down into history as records, two of the members of the club, not playing together, did two different holes in 1 each. At Christmas time in 1899 a most remarkable feat was performed by Mr. P. H. Morton, celebrated in his day as a Cambridge bowler, who took the first hole on the Meyrick course at Bournemouth twice in one day, morning and afternoon, with his shot from the tee. It is a better achievement than usual to take a tolerably long hole in one stroke, and, in this class, honours at present are with Mr. J. F. Anderson, who with a wind behind him and playing on a frost-bound course got the ninth at St. Andrews in a single shot, and the ninth measures 277 yards. It must be accounted excellent also to do the trick one-handed, as did an amateur with the promising name of Willie Park when playing to the eleventh on the relief course at Troon. Mr. Park had to do it with one arm or not at all, for he has only one, and he was certainly to be congratulated on the fact of his unfortunate state not preventing him from graduating as a hole-in-oner.

Men who seem to have an abnormal sense of humour say that it is killing to do a hole in 1 when the other man is giving you a stroke. The other man has then to do it in nothing to halve, or 1 less than nothing to win, and the situation is delightful. I have authentic information of this situation having arisen, and it was rendered all the more interesting from the circumstance that the man giving the stroke was an Open Champion, and the other party was a lady. It was at the twelfth hole at Walton Heath, and one need not hesitate to say that the man who was giving the stroke was James Braid, who thought awhile on the wonders of this most interesting world, and then took a short cut to the next tee without troubling to play the short hole.

Concerning the coincidence connected with the name of Park, just noticed, it may have been perceived that two of our greatest heroes in these matters are of the name of Anderson. This coincidence can be carried a long step farther, for perhaps the most valuable hole in 1 ever gained was by another Anderson, and that was Jamie, the champion. He was playing for the championship at Prestwick and making his last round. He knew he was very close up, and that he had nothing to spare. He was playing the next to the last hole on the course as it used to be—not as it is—and was just about to hit his tee shot when a girl standing close by remarked to her father that the player had teed his ball outside the teeing ground, and that accordingly, if he played his shot from there, he would be disqualified altogether. Jamie heard, looked, and quietly removed his ball and

placed it within the limited space. Then he made his shot and holed out in 1, and very properly he raised his cap to the little girl and said, "Thank you, miss!" for she had done him a very good turn indeed. A few minutes later he was in possession of the Championship Cup. That was in 1878. It is clear that the Andersons are the men who do the holes in 1, particularly as another of them, Mr. W. W. Anderson, once in 1893 worked most gradually and systematically up to a hole in 1 at North Berwick by taking the fourth in 3, the fifth in 2, and the sixth in the minimum 1. One in 1 and three in 6!

The worst of these tricks is that you don't get anything for doing them; you must pay instead. The injustice of this arrangement has been borne in to many minds, notably to that of Mr. Balfour. The right honourable gentleman has never holed in 1, but he has done a hole in two strokes when he received a stroke from his opponent at it, and his caddie ingeniously argued with him that this was exactly the same thing— $2 - 1 = 1$. It was Pointgarry out at North Berwick, and Mr. Balfour was playing with Tom Dunn. "I am astonished!" said Mr. Balfour, pretending that he was. "Am I to pay you for looking at me doing this? Should I not rather receive the money for performing the feat?" But he paid.

There is one hole in the world where you do get paid for achieving a 1, that is if you happen to do it at either the Easter, Whitsuntide, or Autumn meetings. This is what is called the "Island Hole" on the course of the Royal Ashdown Forest Club in Sussex. It is an excellent hole, and a gentleman

who played it on one occasion fell so much in love with it that he endowed it with a sum of £5, the accumulated interest on the sum to go to the competitor at any of the meetings named who should do this trick of getting it in 1. Ever since the endowment was made the interest has been growing and growing, and nobody has qualified for it. Money accumulates so fast once it gets a fair start, that we can imagine this interest some day amounting to a fortune, and then what a scene there will be at the Island Hole at Easter when the golfer, having been training at the Redan, the Maiden, and a few like holes for a whole month previously, comes here with weird clubs and balls made of lead, and has greed written in large characters across his face.

The moral of the hole in 1 is excellently stated by a great master of the game. It demands not only a perfect shot but a perfect fluke. It is a case of the gods giving to them that have, and those that have not are cast into the bunker in front of the green.

IV

Curious, indeed, are some items in the list of the feats of golf. In the game heroic there is testimony to the pluck, perseverance, and enthusiasm of Mr. J. W. Spalding, who in the spring of a recent season came by an awful motor smash in France and lost an eye, but had no sooner risen from the hospital bed and been sent to Italy to recuperate than he was at his golf again, playing himself back with his single eye to the game of scratch quality that he enjoyed

before, and—good for you, Mr. Spalding—but a few weeks went by ere one more scratch medal came his way. Nor shall we forget how a popular champion struggled home to the seventy-second green at Prestwick while the blood was oozing from his lungs.

There are feats of other kinds, as those which count as freaks, poor things enough but wondered at by some. What shall we say of the Pittsburg golfer who wagered four thousand dollars that he could play a ball over four and a half miles of the city streets in one hundred and fifty strokes? Beginning at five o'clock in the morning, he did this thing in one hundred and nineteen strokes, but lost a thousand dollars in damage done to property on the way. That man found an emulator in London who undertook to play a ball from Ludgate Circus to a fountain basin in Trafalgar Square. There are men who like to drive fine balls from the glass faces of other people's expensive watches, and others who prefer the tamer sport of driving from the eggs of hens. There was the man of Sandwich, who, with a champagne bottle as his only "club," played, and—Oh, shame upon it!—beat a neophyte who carried a full bag of the most improved clubs. There was the old-time golfer who lofted balls over the spire of St. Giles' Cathedral in Edinburgh, and another who tooled his gutty from Bruntsfield Links to the top of Arthur's Seat. Better and more purposeful was the practice which Mr. Laidlay used to undertake before championships, when, with Jack White for caddie, he would play a ball from the first tee at North Berwick to the Roundell Hole at Gullane, six miles away, by way of the Eel Burn Hole, the sands along the shore, the

neighbourhood of the fishermen's cottages, and away over Muirfield and the rough country to the top of the hill, playing from whatever lie his ball chanced to find, and once doing this course in a total of ninety-seven strokes.

V

Do we not sometimes hear one sort of sportsmen make it a complaint against golf, that the player does not run any personal risk of injury to his life or his limbs? Some of these men will tell you that you only arrive at real sport when such dangers are incurred. It may be so, but we shall not on that account seek to increase the risks of golf. It is one of the glories of the game that it is such fine sport and commands the wild enthusiasm of the best sportsmen, though it threatens the life neither of the player nor any of the living creatures made by God that give the fulness to Nature, and add, though it may be unconsciously, to the golfer's joy as he strides over the links on a fine morning. In other sports, when man goes wandering over the hills, he takes his gun with him that he may kill something. Leave him alone with Nature, and as the lord of creation he is impelled to go forward to the attack on the lesser beings. In golf alone does he roam over the country and by the side of the sea with never a thought of what he may kill passing through his mind. He has a great joy in his own life, and he is all benevolence and wishful for the happy life of others.

Things have been killed — accidentally — at golf. Many luckless birds have got in the way of tee shots,

and even a fish lost its life on a golf course, and is now in a glass case in the clubhouse at Totteridge. By some devious means it got on to the course one day when there had been heavy rains and much overflowing all about. And—let it be whispered to the shooters and the mighty hunters!—men have been maimed, and even killed on golf links, though we pray that, despite the extra sport, there may be no more of them, and that the single pain of the game may be the skin-blisters and corns that sometimes will come up at the bottom of the left forefinger and elsewhere. I did not think better of golf as a sport when one day, in playing my way outwards on the North Berwick links, a ball from a hidden tee came upon me unawares and carried the pipe that I was smoking away with it for some twenty or thirty yards, while I stood to wonder what was happening. And even by his own deeds may a man courts perils, for we heard the other day that one was playing at Ravenscar when he took a full mashie shot with the object of clearing a stone wall; but the ball struck the wall and rebounded with great force against his head. And from his head it rebounded again over the wall, so it was said; and it was not astonishing to hear that the player was slightly stunned! If adventure in the form of fierce conflict with wild beasts and reptiles is what the full-blooded sportsman wishes, he may have it. A member of the Royal Sydney Club played his ball down a hole, and he put his hand down it to see if he could recover the ball. He seized hold of something soft and drew out a venomous brown snake—which he hurriedly pushed back. I am told by my golfing directory that at Umtala, in Rhodesia, "the course consists of nine

holes. In addition to other hazards, lions are occasionally in evidence." I happen to have had some private confirmation of this report, and it is told me that if ever a golfer in Umtala indulged himself in such a freak as golf by candlelight, as players have been known to do elsewhere, he might not complete the game that he had projected, for the king of beasts is accustomed to prowl over the land at night, and picks up any little living thing that he may find about. In other respects there is something quaint about this golf at Umtala, for I am informed that in the daytime the course is frequented by crows with white bands round their necks, which go by the name of "Free Kirk Ministers." They are thieves, and now and again they swoop down and fly away again with the ball.

They are fine pioneers of the game in South Africa, and it deserves to prosper there. They have needed strong hearts and much patience and forbearance. I have been to golf with a man who has lately come back from a short visit there, and he says that their "greens" look as if they were covered with millions of garnets; and poor as the putting may be from some points of view, it can be performed with marvellous accuracy, and the people of the Colonies deny that anybody loves the game more than they do, or is more enthusiastic in it than they are. Their trials are uncommon and severe, but they become accustomed to them. At Wynberg, or some place like that, there is a lake to carry at a short hole, and one knows what sometimes happens when there is a water hazard between the tee and the green, one shot away. Here the avoidance of it is not made any the easier, because a long line of Kaffir boys is formed up on the near

side of the lake, stripped, with eyes aflame with eagerness, and wildly gesticulating with their arms and hands, and jostling and scolding at each other while they seem to be appealing "Me! me! me!" to the golfer on the tee. Away the ball goes from the tee, and at the slightest indication that it was struck with dangerous inaccuracy, splash go all the Kaffir boys into the water. It is very much like the game of throwing sixpences overboard when your ship of voyage is at anchor off some Eastern port.

VI

Rummaging through a second-hand book shop in Oxford Street one day, I came upon an old volume of sporting anecdotes published far back in 1867, and long since out of print and forgotten. Turning over the pages in the evening, and encountering therein many stories of doughty deeds by river and on field and moor, I came at last upon what must evidently be the original version of the story which has been more briefly told by others of the golf match at night for £500 a hole, and I cannot do better than quote it direct from the book. One of the contributors was quoting from a letter he had received from a well-known sporting friend of his, in which this gentleman gave him a short description of golf, about which nobody else belonging to the book appeared to know anything. In his prefatory remarks concerning the game the correspondent said: "The game of golf is quite a Scotch game; it is played at Blackheath, Wimbledon Common, and a few other places in England; but the players are always Scotchmen.

It is a game requiring a good eye and great skill; and people who get over the first difficulties of the game are generally quite as fond of it as the English are of cricket." With no disparagement of the attractions of cricket, one would be inclined to say that in these days the English who get over the first difficulties of the game of golf, and even those unfortunates who do not get over those difficulties, are much fonder of it than the said English are of cricket.

Then, concerning that great match, the correspondent writes: "Lord Kennedy and the late Mr. Cruickshank, of Langley Park, were good players, and had frequent matches for large sums of money; but the most remarkable match ever played by them came off during the Montrose race week many years since. At the race ordinary they got up a match of three holes, for £500 each hole, and agreed to play it then and there. It was about ten or half-past ten p.m. and quite dark. No light was allowed except one lantern placed on the hole, and another carried by the attendant of the player, in order that they might ascertain to whom the ball struck belonged. We all moved down to the golf course to see this curious match. Boys were placed along the course, who were accustomed to the game, to listen to the flight of the balls, and to run to the spot where a ball struck and rested on the ground. I do not remember which of the players won the odd hole; it was won, I know, by only one hole. But the most remarkable part of the match was, that they made out their holes with much about the same number of strokes that they usually did when playing in daylight. I think, on an average, that they took about five or six strokes in daylight, and in the dark six or seven. They were, however,

in the constant habit of playing over the Montrose course." Surely this must be accounted one of the most extraordinary games of golf we have heard of.

VII

In days gone by the position of the lady in the great world of golf was something of a doubtful quantity, but there can be no question that she is now an established institution, and that she will stay. There have been men who have said that golf is not a lady's game, and many who still stoutly maintain that it is at all events only a game for very young ladies who have not taken upon themselves any serious domestic cares. But it makes little difference what they say. For the first time in history a married lady won the Ladies' Championship in 1906. The ladies have a golf union of their own, which is the kind of thing that a large section of rebellious men have been sighing for for many years, but are apparently still far from getting. Moreover, they have an inter-county championship, which again is what men say they ought to have, but cannot get.

Some of the oldest but least common golf traditions have reference to women, and it seems to be the fact that one of the first monarchs in England or Scotland who ever sought pleasure and relaxation in trundling a golf ball over the links was Mary Queen of Scots, and that she played on golfing ground no less celebrated than St. Andrews. This was in 1563. During that winter Mary occupied a house in South Street, and it is generally believed that she yielded to the spell of the place and played golf on the links with

Chastelard, the favourite, who was subsequently beheaded. Although the evidence that she did thus play at St. Andrews is not conclusive, it is very likely that she did so, for it is quite certain that she played at Edinburgh and elsewhere, and it is variously quoted as a specimen of her heartlessness on the one hand and of her enthusiasm for the game on the other, that she was found playing it only a few days after the murder of her husband.

It is suggested that the golfing ancestors of the present lady players were fish girls, and the evidence on the point is comprised in a minute of the Royal Musselburgh Golf Club, dated 14th December 1810, which reads thus: "The club to present by subscription a handsome new creel and shawl to the best Female Golfer who plays on the annual occasion on 1st January next, old style (12th January, new), to be intimated to the Fish Ladies by William Robertson, the officer of the club. Two of the best Barcelona silk handkerchiefs to be added to the above premium of the creel.—(Signed) ALEX. G. HUNTER, Captain."

But the modern golfing ladies absolutely ignore all this ancient history, and, in a manner, started afresh with a Year 1 on the inception of their championship, like the French people did at the time of their big Revolution. What happened before did not count. Thus, from their point of view, they arrived at a sort of millennium straight away, having no brakes of custom and conservatism on their wheel of progress.

Consequently it is no business of the modern writer to argue as to whether the fair sex ought or ought not to play golf; the fact is there that they do, and that more of them do so every week. And they do it

very whole-heartedly. In the box-rooms of the houses of golfing ladies are sundry old tennis racquets with their stringing limp, despised and rejected, and their once favourite croquet mallets have been cut down in the shaft and are now used for odd jobs of carpentering about the house. It is said that the golfing girl does not care a jot what she wears on the links or—*mirabile dictu*!—what she looks like, so long as she has boots or shoes on with which she can get a firm stance, or upper arrangements which enable her to swing with ease. Thus one hears that she has enormous nails in her footgear, wears the loosest of Irish homespun costumes, and wouldn't be seen in a picture hat. And she is a fine, robust, healthy creature, who loves the game as much as anyone. The great professionals say that she is a splendid pupil—better even than the men. Harry Vardon holds that the American ladies—whom he has studied on their native links—are better and more thorough than ours; but he thinks that ours are very good when they roll up their sleeves and give up the big hats. "They seem (ladies in general, that is) to take closer and deeper notice of the hints you give them, and to retain the points of the lesson longer in their memories," says Vardon, and James Braid concurs in the judgment. The only drawback to all this big hitting, hard tramping, and devil-may-care spirit of the girl on the links is that, according to Miss May Hezlet, one of the queens of the links, it enlarges the hands and feet! But think of the freedom!

When the ladies play among themselves—as they generally do—they employ, according to report, a golfing vocabulary of their own, which, though unconventional, let it be said in haste, is quite proper.

Elsewhere than in happy England, the blessedness of whose sporting girls has been sung by Gilbert of the Savoy, it may not be the same; indeed it appeared in the newspapers a little while since that the minister of a fashionable church in Halifax, Nova Scotia, declared from his pulpit one Sunday that information had reached him that "women who went to church on Sunday, went to golf on Monday and swore like troopers!" When this was brought to the attention of the English ladies, they said that the information that had been given to the reverend gentleman was very likely true, as those ladies probably played such a very bad game. In England there was no occasion to make use of such expletives as were suggested, and a "Dash!" and "Oh, you naughty, *naughty* little ball" were generally found sufficient to meet the exigencies of the most trying situations. At one time there seemed to be some considerable rivalry and jealousy, quite characteristically feminine, between the British and American lady golfers. But Miss Rhona Adair as was went over to the States and won all her matches, the strain of the effort—believing that she really had the credit of her country at stake—being, so it was authoritatively said, largely responsible for the breakdown in her health that ensued. Then the Americans sent over a big team of ladies to try to capture our Ladies' Championship with one of them. The battlefield was at Cromer, and such a scene was there as one by one the American flags were hauled down! At the end of the meeting the British lioness held undisputed possession of the field, and she placed the Cup on her tea table.

VIII

Perhaps there is more to be said for keeping one's score for the round when playing a match than is allowed by many people who occasionally discuss this matter with some heat. It may be agreed at once that the golfer who consistently subordinates the importance and interest of his match to his anxiety regarding his aggregate score is to be condemned, and more than ever so when his reckoning of his figures is done openly and audibly, and when he is guilty of remarking, for example, a splendidly fought match being all square at the eighteenth tee, that he has a 4 left for 79, showing in what direction his strongest ambition lies for the time being. Such a person is an undesirable opponent, and a nuisance on the links. In match play the match is the thing, and those who do not want the match, but only the score, should go out alone with their caddies. Yet at the same time it must be remembered that a man's scores for the round are often the only real indication that can be afforded him of knowing what exactly is his form for the time being, and how well or badly he is playing, and it is eminently desirable that he should from time to time be posted with this knowledge, which in either case should act as an incentive towards the improvement of his game. A man may be winning all his matches with two or three holes to spare, and if he is of a placid temperament and not given to any closely discriminating analysis of the details of his own game, he may often be living in a fool's paradise with regard to the quality of his golf

and the accuracy of his handicap. It may be true that handicaps are provided chiefly for match-play purposes, and that if a man can win half his matches with the handicap that is given him, there is not much cause for fault-finding; but, after all, handicaps are supposed to represent the relative strengths of all players, even though they do not, and it is reasonable to expect that the holder of a certain handicap should be able to go round his course, say, one time in three or four at a net score that would come out at par. One must doubt whether the average seven or eight handicap man does this, which, of course, leads to the usual conclusion that the general tendency in medium handicaps in these days is to make them too flattering.

And, again, when a player finds himself winning his match with so much ease that the match itself has really very little interest for him, if any at all, when he is playing well and his opponent's game has gone completely to the dogs, it is surely pardonable for him to concentrate his chief attention upon his score for the round, so long as he does not do it obtrusively, and does nothing to indicate to his opponent that he has other things in mind besides the question as to whether he shall achieve victory at the twelfth or thirteenth hole. It is simply a matter of common sense and good manners, and all scores should be kept mentally, and should not be spoken of until the round is over. The keeping of a score will often urge a man to greater effort and the display of greater skill in a particular emergency, and will thus tend to the improvement of his game. Nearly all players of great skill and long experience agree that there is nothing in the world like much score play for

the betterment of the golfer. It strengthens the sense of responsibility, and of the need for the utmost concentration of thought and effort upon every shot that is made, and when a golfer has taught himself to do this he has gone a long way towards the achievement of that severe self-discipline which is an essential characteristic of the good and sound player whose game has always to be feared. It is because they have not that self-discipline and have not cultivated that sense of responsibility, that the majority of amateurs are absolutely terrorised by a card and rendered incapable even of playing anything like their real game. They do not so much fear to make a bad shot when it will only mean a lost hole, which may be won back five minutes later; but it is a different thing when the bad shot may cost three strokes, which have to enter into the final reckoning. Yet the bad shot is equally bad in either case and ought to be equally regretted, but is not. And if an amateur does not keep some mental account of his score when engaged in matches, he has scarcely any other opportunity of practising medal play, since it is not customary and is not desirable that pairs should go out together matched with each other on the strokes for the round and not on holes.

Apart from the objections which have been urged against it, and which it has been suggested may not be quite so well founded as some people appear to think, one is inclined to fancy that in many cases one of the drawbacks to the continual counting of one's score is the inclination that is bred in the player to self-deception, and in the course of our golf we come across many curious instances of it. The simplest and most frequent is the waiving of the lost stroke

for a stymie. If the player's ball is within two feet of the hole when the stymie is laid him, it may be legitimate enough for him to reckon that if he had been engaged in pure score play he would have holed the putt that he was in the actual circumstances unable to hole, and therefore to deduct a stroke from the actual number taken on the round. But in the weakness of their human nature many who are thus engaged in score counting go much farther than this in giving themselves the benefits of doubts. It is difficult or impossible for them to draw any line between that which it was very likely they would do and that which they might possibly do. If for the purposes of their score they give themselves the two-foot putt which they would have holed but for the stymie, then surely there can be no objection to giving themselves a thirty-inch putt, and if that, then one also at a yard, and a yard and a half—two yards, three yards, four. And, pursuing this process of self-cheating, you will find the golfer submitting it to himself that he may count it as one stroke to get down, when he is fifteen or twenty feet from the hole, on the reasoning that many a time in his life before he had holed such putts, and was certain to do so again, so why not this time?

This is but one of the many frauds that players are brought to practise upon themselves in their yearning for a good round. Have we not known them to give themselves a four or five feet putt when their opponents had already given up the hole, because, though they had the time and opportunity for making the stroke, they were afraid that they might miss it, and so spoil that nice score which they

were building up? They say to themselves that if they did putt it they would be certain to succeed, so what matter. And worse still is the case of the man who goes up to his ball in such a circumstance and putts at it, perhaps with one hand, pretending to himself that he is not trying! Yet if the ball goes in he feels a wholesome satisfaction of having done his duty by his card; and if it does not go in he still counts it as having done so, because it would have done if he had tried properly. There is also the case of the other man who, having missed such a putt by half an inch, perhaps unluckily, makes a bargain with himself that if he can do that putt immediately and successfully four times one after the other, he will count it to him after all, having thus proved that it was well within the scope of his ability, and that his first failure was an accident and not likely to occur again. And I have heard of men who, counting their scores, and having obtained a lie of most exceptional badness after a good shot, have declined to include in their mental reckoning the fruitless stroke that followed, on the ground that the chances of their getting such a lie in a medal round were a thousand to one against!

Strangest case of all, I once played with a man who told me at the end of his round what a good score he had done, and proceeded to detail the figures 4 5 5 3, etc. "But," I said, "you were in the bunker at the first hole and took 6." "Yes," he said, "but in counting my score I always give myself a 4 at the first hole, no matter what I take; because, don't you see, if I were out to make the best return possible, as if trying to break a record, I could play the first hole two or three times, if

necessary, until I got my par 4, and then go on with that round. I would be giving up the round each time when I failed, and starting a fresh round ; so, you see, the 4 at the first is always certain, and so I always count it, whatever I do." I saw.

"Oh, what a tangled web we weave
When first we practise to deceive,"

even to deceive ourselves.

Thus does this score counting and this yearning for one's record round breed a moral cowardice in such men. There is only one score to count, and that is the one which would be passed according to the rules of stroke play. If golfers must count scores they must be just to themselves, and they must not even temper their justice with any mercy, for the laws of golf are inexorable, and in them there is no mercy.

IX

There are many who hold that the most exasperating opponent of all is he who is afflicted with an amazing indecision when about to make his very shortest putts. For a minute he will stand with his putter to the ball as if in abject fear of his fate, and surely at such a time there are strange fancies flying through his brain. They must be like the fancies of a drowning man. It was agreed among a company of his friends that these must be the jerky thoughts of such a man whom they well know when he was engaged gloomily upon the dreaded task of putting a ball that lay eighteen inches from the hole, the little

patch of putting green that intervened being perfectly smooth and level :—

This is a very simple job,
And when I have holed the ball
I shall be certain of my half-crown.
Still, I must be careful. It is very easy to miss these short putts ;
And I have missed many thousands, costing me
Many pounds—scores of pounds.
And now that I am up against it,
And looking at this putt,
It does not seem quite so easy as it did at first.
It will require most careful management—a most delicate tap,
And very accurate gauging of strength.
One needs to be very cool and deliberate over these things.
One's nerves, and stomach, and liver must be in prime condition.
I wish I had not been out to dinner last night.
Was it Willie Park or Ben Sayers
Who said that the man who could putt could beat anybody?
I believe him—Willie or Ben.
This is really a most awkward putt.
The green looks slower than the others. It is very rough.
Why don't the committee sack the greenkeeper,
Who ought to be a market gardener?
It is like a bunker between
My ball and the hole. Such very rough stuff.
One, two, three—six—nine—why!
There are eleven big blades of grass
Sticking up like the rushes at Westward Ho !
The grass becomes so very stiff and wiry in this very hot weather.
(Yes, it is too hot to putt properly.)
My ball will never break through this grass.
It is one of the hardest putts I have ever seen.
I wish I had more loft on my putter.
I *was* an ass not to bring that other one out from my locker,
Where it is eating its head off (so to speak).
I think, also, that a little cut would do this putt a lot of good.
But how? The green slopes from the left ;
Yet it seemed to slope from the right.
Also, it goes downwards to the hole.
This is a perfect devil of a putt !
I know my stance for putting is not good,
But Harry Vardon says that every man has his own stance,

So perhaps it is all right.
 But I had better move my left foot ; it seems in the way.
 I see that two—four—six—seven of the pimples on this ball
 Are quite flat.
 Nobody can putt with a ball like that.
 A man ought to be allowed to change his ball
 Even on the green at times like this.
 I must allow for those pimples.
 Confound that fellow Brown !
 He seems to be waiting.
 And he is smoking his dirty shag so much
 That I can hardly see the hole for smoke.
 If I lose this hole I shall lose the match.
 I am quite with Johnny Low in his new idea for handicapping,
 When he says some of us should be allowed to play
 Our bad shots over again.
 In that case I would have one good smack at this ball
 To get the strength and the hang of
 Everything. And I am certain—yes, I am quite absolutely certain—
 That I would hole the ball next time.
 However, what does it matter?
 Better men than I have missed such putts,
 And I am not a chicken—live a hard life—lot of work—
 Office to-night—awful day to-morrow.
 And as the wife was saying—
 Let me see. Oh ! hang this putt !
 He can have his half-crown if he wants it,
 But I am going to have one good smack
 At this ball. Now—
 No, that was wrong. Now, yes, yes—

.

My godfathers !
 And my godmothers !
 I have missed that putt again !

*[When the ball came to a standstill it was just an inch and
 a half short of the hole, and considerably to the left of
 the proper line to the middle.]*

X

Some of those cantankerous people who have no sympathy with games, and but a limited confidence in the wise precept that the healthy mind is most frequently to be found in association with the healthy body—practical people they like to call themselves—will sometimes ask you what is the good of golf. It is generally useless to attempt to humour them by advancing the proposition that it returns a dividend of fifty per cent. in mental and physical efficiency, and seventy-five in the general happiness of the subject.

What are really the least convincing examples of the practical value of golf are the most effective in argument against such folks. With them it may count a word in favour of the game that a man once playing it found that his ball from a full drive came to rest on a sixpence which had evidently dropped through a hole in the pocket of a previous player. Here, indeed, was a material practical gain! They will be impressed also with the possibilities of the game when they are told a little story of how a man, who was not in quest of art treasures at the time, discovered an old master accidentally, and entirely through the medium of his golf. It was in this way. A Montreal art dealer was playing the game on a country course one day in 1903, when he sliced a ball so badly that away it went through the window of a cottage hard by. Thereupon there came out from it an old lady, a French Canadian, who was possessed of remarkable power of speech, of which the golfer

was given much evidence. Presently, when her attack was somewhat exhausted, the poor golfer offered to recompense her for the damage done to the window; but then it was put to him that the broken glass was not the only casualty. The ball, after passing through the window, had continued its course of destruction by breaking the glass that covered the picture; and without making any examination of the nature of this damage the player agreed that he would give a matter of a pound for the picture besides paying for the broken window. This soothed the feelings of the lady of the cottage, and she pressed upon him the picture, for the damage to which he had paid so handsomely. He took it away with him, and at home in the evening he was led in a spirit of curiosity to make some examination of it, when, to his astonishment, he discovered that it was a Dutch interior by Teniers, which he sold a few days later for £500. To the credit of this golfer be it said, he sent a cheque for half the amount to the cottager. This is an excellent story to tell to the absurd and practical people, and a true one.

It might be of service to add to it an account of a shot that was played on one occasion by a gentleman of no less scientific importance than Professor John Milne, who is known as a great seismologist, the man who is most in evidence when earthquakes are troubling. When the earth is still the Professor will leave his instruments in the Isle of Wight to their own care for a period, and he will wander away to the links for some golf. To what great feat has the golf of this professor led him? Why, he of all men became the first to drive a golf ball across the Victoria Falls on the Zambesi River—a hundred and

sixty yards of roaring, foaming water. That was when the British Association went for its annual meeting to South Africa, and Professor Sims Woodhead, the celebrated Cambridge pathologist, was so much impressed by the achievement, that he too attempted to drive the Zambesi, and succeeded. But these are the things that may be done by Professors once, and not always. Two more balls were teed on the bank, and the Professors smote them with their clubs, but those balls were claimed by the Zambesi, and perchance they have been digested by the crocodiles. Now here you have something done by golf which was not golf, but which marked the advance of civilisation into the dark regions of the African continent. Our practical friends must allow this to the credit of the game, not only for the achievement in itself, but for the possibilities that it suggests, for is not a picture at once conjured up of the resourceful golfer driving a ball from the shore to a sinking ship, when all other means of establishing communication therewith had failed? To the ball there will be tied a silken thread, and the thread will help a string across, and the string will drag a rope. Thus must we plead for golf!

While in these serious aspects of the battle of life the game is thus to come to our aid, it shall be of similar service also in the gentler paths. Once upon a time a maker of golf balls told me how he had suspected a rival of putting cores from old balls made by him A into all so-called new ones made by the rival B. Therefore A for a little while wound a tiny piece of tissue paper with the rubber of his cores, and on the paper there was written A's name and

address. Some time later the tissues came home again through the medium of the balls that bore the name of B. There was this damning evidence of the pilfering of the cores. This story is not told as a hint to the trade, but surely it will convey one to ingenious persons who wish for a mode of secret communication with others which will be sure and safe. May it not be that some Romeo of to-day has already come by the device of lofting a ball or two on to the balcony of the fair Juliet, who in the seclusion of her chamber may be discovered in operation upon the cover with hair-pins and fire-irons, and presently in raptures upon the endearments expressed in the *billet doux* of her Romeo?

Perhaps it will not avail us as golfers to tell our practical friends that the principles of the application of physical force which have been taught us in the game, as of the steady body, the fixed centre of movement, and of the hand being under the constant leadership of the eye, have benefited us not merely in the playing of other games, such as billiards and tennis, but in the attainment of greater proficiency in some of the most practical and useful of domestic occupations, so that the man of all others who may be depended upon to hang up the pictures in a new house as pictures should be hanged, is the golfer who has got his handicap down to 6. We will tell also to the critic of our game that it affords a scope for a kind of humour that is of occasional service to some wits and others. It helps them to raise a laugh over the tea-cups when they say that they will take the odd or two more in sugar. We do not like this jugglery with the terms, and it is only to be excused in such exceptional cases as when the doctor tells the new

golfer that his temperature is 99° and the patient inquires anxiously as to what the bogey is ; or when, in discussing the frowning fortunes of some unfortunate acquaintance who has had a hard time in life, and is called upon for severe labour in his last days, it is said of this poor chap that he is playing the nineteenth hole and has made an indifferent drive. But, in seriousness, we like our golf to be kept sacred to itself, and unassociated with the generally duller pursuits of this workaday world.

XI

Is there not a considerable superstition of the links ? Even great players have old clubs that they carry about with them, not so much for their practical value as for the luck of the thing, as they fancy it ; and a man once said at Prestwick that he always carried in his bag a queer-shaped iron, though he never used it in these days. This was because on one famous occasion many years before, when he was seven down with eight to play, and won the match by a brilliancy that did not belong to him, he could only account for it by the circumstance that this club had somehow found its way into his bag by accident. As a small acknowledgment to the gods, and a hint that such favours would be welcome in the future, he vowed that he would carry that club with him on the links for evermore, but that never would he play with it. And he keeps his vow most steadfastly, to the irritation of the burdened caddie.

Some sentiment clings to that cleek belonging to Mr. Edward Blackwell, which, it has been said, is

"shaped like an old boot," but which, as we all know, has done work upon which any cleek might be congratulated. And is it not declared that before Mr. Travis set out to play in the championship at Sandwich, Ben Sayers lent to him for mascot his favourite spoon?

Other golfers other fancies. Some have it that it is unlucky to go out to play without a supply of money, for then surely shall the half-crown be lost; and others fear that it might go hardly with them if they had not the company of their favourite pipe. On severely important occasions, Andrew Kirkaldy will hie himself beforehand to his tobacconists in St. Andrews and buy himself a new pipe for luck. Does not special fortune attach to special golfing clothes, and is not the light grey jacket that which brings most luck? Think of all the fine players who jacket themselves in this way with darker wear below, which is out of the usual order. Mr. Hilton has a jacket which goes always with him as the lamb went with Mary, and has thus played its part in championships innumerable. This is a jacket that has won its place in golfing history.

The superstitions about the winning of certain holes are stupid and general. Why is it such an unfortunate thing with some people to win the first hole? And yet do they always try to win, and do not bemoan their fate if they lose. A trifle more reason, perhaps, is there in the old couplet:

"Two up and five to play,
Never won a match, they say."

But of course matches have been won when the winner was two up with five to go, hundreds and

thousands of them. There is one man of high championship rank who has a list of exceptions to this rule, which he applies for his own consolation when the fates decree that he shall be two holes to the good as he stands upon the fourteenth tee. If it suits him, he will put it that the spell will not work if it happened that he fluked the thirteenth with a long putt; and he holds upon suitable occasion that it has nothing to do with a foursome. One may suppose that the essence of the idea is that the man who is two up at this state of the game is just short of being in nearly the strongest position possible, and is sometimes a little inclined to be slack in consequence; and then, if he loses the next hole, and is only one up with four to go, a sudden fear seizes him: he feels that he must fight for his life, becomes flurried, presses—and then the rest of the tale is soon told. But the best and the worst of the proverb lies in its recitation by the man who is down when his opponent, bold in confidence, is taking the honour at the fourteenth.

It must be held as an unfortunate thing to play a ball into a graveyard, and it is better, perhaps, that one's attention should not be called to the memorial stone hard by the eleventh tee at Deal, which tells of a foul murder committed upon some fair maiden at this spot in the long ago when Deal was unacquainted with the game that has given her fame.

We hear that the most famous lady players carry charms when engaged in their most important games. She who won fame as Miss Rhona Adair is said to have invariably worn a particular ribbon with a gruesome device of skull and crossbones upon it whenever she very much wanted to win her match.

White heather is supposed to be a most potent charm, and it has been told as a secret that some ladies decline to wash their hands between rounds, though luncheon comes in the interval, lest evil should befall them afterwards.

THE WANDERING PLAYER

I

THE golfers and other people who know nothing of St. Andrews are often inclined to fancy that some of the enthusiasm professed by those who have a tolerable golfing acquaintance with it is affected, because it "is the proper thing," and because it harmonises with the feelings of many revered members of the old school of the game. Perhaps such scepticism is pardonable, particularly when it is known that there have been many hundreds of golfers who have gone to St. Andrews once and failed to be impressed by it, and have not hesitated to declare their doubts about its supremacy on their return to their native links. These people belong to one of three classes. The first is the smallest of the three, consisting of good golfers of sound discrimination, whose idiosyncrasies of taste lead them honestly to the conclusion that St. Andrews is greatly over-rated, and that it has superiors in various other greens. The second and largest batch is composed of men who lack both the necessary golfing knowledge and the true golfing spirit. The third consists of those who have not had sufficient time to know, for verily St. Andrews is, to a large extent, a cultivated taste, and there are many worthy golfers to whom

its first appeal has not been entirely convincing. There is a more or less vague something that attracts instantly, but the rest only comes to the Southron stranger after two or three, or even more, visits of fairly long duration.

The English golfer does not generally love St. Andrews at first sight, but he shows that interest in her which leads him to talk about her and awakens the suspicions of his friends. Then he may speak of her with indifference, but he goes back to her again and again, and at last one day, when he returns to his home after one of these visits, he feels an exquisite soreness at heart, a sweet longing, a strange exaltation, and he knows that a change has come over his golfing life, that he is at last in love with St. Andrews, and that he cannot do without her. Forthwith his plans for future golfing expeditions are changed and modified. He must now always think of St. Andrews. If he is a man of leisure he must go there at least once a year, and even if he has but little time to spare he will be going to Scotland once in a twelve-month with his bag of clubs, and must so arrange his itinerary that he shall touch Leuchars Junction going or coming, and shall run down that little strip of railway which makes to the golfer the finest travelling in the world, for two or three days of heartening play on the premier links. All golf is good, but there is something subtle about the St. Andrews golf which makes it not quite like the other, and the man who learns to love it, though the love come in his riper years, when the emotions are slow of action and may be weak in result, is faithful to it for the rest of his golfing days.

Probably no man has been able completely to

define the charm of the place. Its charm is of its golf, for though it has some natural beauty, and is greatly historic and of celebrity for its ruins, it casts no enduring spell over the man who does not know the use of a driver. The constant talk of it and its tradition has something to do with the charm, no doubt. The stranger, who has never struck a ball there, feels something of nervous ecstasy as he hears the brakes go on the train that slows down on its approach to the station. There, during the last two minutes of his journey, is a view of the links, the Swilcan Burn, the players going out to the second and approaching the seventeenth—and there goes a ball on to that famous road!—just like the fathers of golf used to do in the olden days as it is written in the books. Then, walking in St. Andrews, one seems to breathe golf as never before. All the men and boys one sees are players or caddies; there is a knot of men at the street-corner talking about the 76 that one of the professionals did in his evening round; there are many golf shops; it is all golf. On the walls, and in the hotels and post offices, there are displayed official notices, giving the warning that those who play on the course with irons only, or who practise putting on the eighteenth green, may be fined 20s. or—wonderful enactment!—be sent to prison for a period. A personage of no less consequence than a Cabinet Minister, this being Mr. Asquith, has been stopped under this rule. The pipes that one hears seem to be skirling a song of the greatness of the game and the glory of the men who used to play it here in the olden days. Above all, one comes instantly by a deep sense as of walking on hallowed ground, of being one of the heirs to a

great heritage in golf, and to a great responsibility. Life and the game are stronger things than they used to be. That same subtle oppression of soul is felt as when one has a first glance at the Pyramids or at the tomb of the great Napoleon in the Invalides. These things stand for what was a great might, and in its golf St. Andrews is truly mighty.

And so it comes that the spirit of the game seems to brood over this hallowed spot, and stirs the golfer with fine imaginings and gives to him great impulses. It is all so different from anything else. On the evening of his first day he knows that St. Andrews is not like the other places, and when, after his first rest, he kisses the morning, he is glad and he is exalted, because he is at St. Andrews, and there is not a man or woman in the place who will not talk to him of the game that he loves and sympathise with him in his ardour. The golfer has come home at last.

It is difficult to describe the merits of the wonderful old course. It is there. The people who do not know it cannot be made to understand, and the people who do know it have not to be told. It would be hard for anybody to prove that it is not the best, if the severest, test of scientific golf. Nothing but scientific golf will avail the player here. Of late years people have been railing against the bunkers on the course, and the increase thereof; but after all it is to be remembered that the placing of the majority of these bunkers has been the result of the aggregate of thought of some of the best golfers in the world for a period of scores of years, and they must be considered in the spirit that Mr. John Low suggests, that no bunker can really be unfair. It is there to be avoided, and it is the best shot that avoids

it. No doubt this view might lead to awkward conclusions if pressed in some cases, but it is apparently sound as a general principle of scientific golf, as apart from the mere pastime and the sensual passion for hard hitting. If a bunker is in the middle of the course at just the distance of a good drive, it is obviously the duty of the driver to play to one side or the other and avoid it; and that is just the characteristic of proper play at nearly all of the St. Andrews holes, that the tee shot has not only to be cleanly played, and at the proper strength and so forth, but that over and above all these things it has to be so accurately placed as on no other course. Position means everything at St. Andrews, and the number and variety of the undulations of the course, the constant bunker, and the extreme diversity of the glorious putting greens and the approaches thereto, bring it about that a man may play a hole a thousand times and it has something new to offer him every time, and he might play rounds on this course all the time from his childhood to his old age, and those of his last years would be riper with interest than any that went before. Here, indeed, is a course for character; there is nothing like it.

II

Hoylake is new in comparison, but Hoylake is old for England, and it is the leader of golf in the southern section of the kingdom. Hoylake has fine traditions of its own which it would not exchange for those of any other centre or club, and while it has always had the most perfect respect for the dignity and the conservation of the game, it has

occasionally shown a commendable disposition towards useful progress. It was the Royal Liverpool Club at Hoylake that took the initiative in the establishment of the Amateur Championship and the international matches; and at other times it has impelled St. Andrews towards unwilling, but necessary, action. The club may look back with pride upon the earnestness and dignity of its pioneers. They were true golfers of the old and most worthy school, and when they began the game there they had, as in some other old places, to take a pinch of sand out of the hole that they had just putted into in order to make a tee for their next drive.

By some it is said that it was the establishment of the links at Westward Ho! that gave the idea for making a golf course at Hoylake to the Liverpool golfers. Some of the people of West Kirby played there about the middle of the last century, and the Rabbit Warren, as the present links was then called, was used for golf about 1865. The Royal Liverpool Club was established four years later, and for twenty-six years, before the building of its present handsome clubhouse, was housed in the Royal Hotel.

In those days the course began on the hotel side, but with the change of residence there was some necessary changing of the order of the holes, the old first becoming the present last, the old second being now numbered the first, and the old last is the present seventeenth. The land of the links is leased from Lord Stanley of Alderley, whose ancestors acquired it in the time of Queen Elizabeth; and it is significant of the increasing richness of Hoylake, due largely to its golf, that the assessment upon the club

by the union overseers, which used to be £165, was recently raised to £500.

In the quality of the golfers that it has produced Hoylake can challenge the whole world of golf. It alone has found an amateur winner for the Open Championship—two of them. It bred the inimitable Mr. John Ball, who has six times won the Amateur Championship—1888, 1890, 1892, 1894, 1899, and 1907—and is good enough to win it again; and he won the Open Championship in 1890, thus holding both titles at the same time, being the only golfer who has ever done so, and quite likely who ever will. A brass tablet in the entrance-hall and the clock over the clubhouse commemorate this achievement. Mr. Harold Hilton, winner of the Open Championship in 1892 and 1897, and the amateur event in 1900 and 1901; and Mr. John Graham, junr., one of the finest products of Hoylake, despite his insistence that he is a Scottish golfer when it comes to International rivalry, is now at the top of his game, and is good enough to win one Championship and very nearly another. So true is it that a fine course will breed fine players.

Of the quality of Hoylake there can be no two opinions. It is one of the very best courses in the world, and by common consent it and Deal are the two best in England. Hoylake is far better than it looks. The first hole is generally cited as being one of the best two-shot holes to be found anywhere, and it is always good, no matter where the wind is. The course looks easy. If you play thoroughly well it may not be difficult, but if you do not play well it rends your miserable game asunder. What the possibilities for failure are, were exemplified in a grossly exaggerated manner in the final for the

Amateur Championship in 1906, when the finalists halved the sixth hole, which goes by the name of the Briars, in 9! They lost their heads, and a player needs his head at Hoylake. The course is famous for its putting greens. They are fine now; but they are not what they used to be, for in the old days they were so magnificent that it used to be said by everybody that it was a sin to walk upon them. The water has in late years been drawn from the land for the purposes of wells, and this has made a difference.

St. Andrews and Hoylake—a noble pair!

III

Choosing a companion for a golfing holiday is at all times a serious business, and the light and thoughtless manner in which some young people perform the task is, in the interests of their own future golfing welfare, deplorable. Young people are mentioned advisedly, for you do not find the old golfers making their selections hastily, and they do not live to regret those that they make as do the hot-blooded youths who are swayed by the fancies of a moment. These select at haste, and often enough they repent bitterly before the golfing trip is over. The same nice discrimination should be exercised in the choice of such a companion as would be, or ought to be, in the choice of a wife, and many of the points that have to be taken into consideration are similar. As a general principle, youth should not mate with age for the purposes of many days' golf in their own exclusive company away from home, when the twain

are cast upon their own joint resources and have their pleasure and their welfare bound up with each other. It is a good thing that there should have been a long and tolerably thorough acquaintance beforehand, and there should be some approximate equality in playing ability. The partners to this important contract should be satisfied above all things that not only are their ideas and ideals concerning the good game largely alike, and their tastes outside the game agreeable to each other, but that their temperaments agree to the point that they can make the necessary allowances for each other's waywardness of conduct, when in the interests of continued concord it becomes imperatively necessary that this should be done. Trials of this kind will have to be endured, and it is well that there should be a firm resolution beforehand to bear with each other's weaknesses, satisfied always of the high value of the man. Some old golfers have said, and wisely, that it is a good thing to go away on a golfing holiday with a man and never to golf with him—to get the game with others, and to talk of it with the companion of the trip at breakfast in the morning and at dinner when the play for the day is over; and there can be little doubt that in this maxim there is much wisdom, though it is not necessary to carry the recommendation to the extreme. Too much familiarity with the game of one man breeds some contempt for it, even though it be a game that is more remunerative in holes than that possessed by the other; and while there are no rivals like old rivals, still, if their rivalry is uninterrupted it becomes dull and uninteresting.

IV

There is an old golfer who says that it cost him many weeks of failure, and many hundreds of pounds, to come by that experience in conducting a golfing holiday as enabled him to make a complete success of such always afterwards. For the benefit of others of the smallest experience, who are liable to err grievously, he offers the following precepts :—

“However keen one may be, and however much one may enjoy the excellent golf that is obtained on a good seaside course, it is a great mistake to play too much during a short holiday, and failure to appreciate this fact has completely spoiled more golfing holidays than any other cause. The early keenness is followed by carelessness, and after a while the game becomes somewhat of a taskmaster. Then one’s game suffers severely, and even a strong physical constitution is hardly equal to three rounds a day kept up constantly. Yet that is what many holiday golfers try to do, and when they have finished their vacation they are sick of the mention of golf, and wish they had gone fishing or shooting instead. My advice is never to play more than two rounds a day, and to play no golf at all on two days of the week ; whilst, if the holiday lasts a month, the man will be all the better for a four or five days’ rest in the middle of it. He will then enjoy all his golf, and the entire holiday will be much more of a success.

“On a holiday course, where there are many visitors, one sees a greater variety of clubs and

golfing implements than anywhere else, and numerous novelties of a more or less attractive character. However favourably many of these ideas may strike you, do your best to resist the inclination to invest in them, because, if you once begin doing this, you will have a dreadful quantity of rubbish to take home. A golfer who thinks several times before he buys a new club when he is at home, somehow seems to be a very irresponsible creature when he is holidaying, and will purchase wonderful brasseys, niblicks, and putters at the slightest provocation.

“As soon as you get on to your holiday seaside course, don't make the mistake of beginning to play for larger money stakes than you are accustomed to do on your home links, even when you are invited to do so and you may feel it difficult to refuse. Comparatively small beginnings in this direction have a way of developing before the holiday is far advanced into gambling on the game to an extent that the player cannot afford. Apart from this important view of the matter, the pleasure of playing the game is completely ruined. A ball on the match is enough for anybody, no matter what balance he may have at his bank, and in starting a golfing holiday a man will be wise to make up his mind in advance that he will not play for more.

“When you are a complete stranger and alone, and you beg the club steward that he will find you matches, do not hesitate when he offers you an opponent, even though the latter's handicap is either too large or too small to give you the most enjoyable match. Take him on at once, and be thankful.

The steward, who is always an obliging fellow, has a rather difficult task in suiting everybody, and you should be greatly obliged for the favour he does you in supplying you with any kind of match.

"If you are a long-handicap fozzler, make your start for the round either very early in the morning or very late, say nine o'clock or half-past eleven. Either of these times is just as good as half-past ten, and you will miss the crowd, have a clear course, and spare yourself the anxiety of being a constant annoyance to the scratch men behind you if you started at the busy time. You will play a much better game.

"At the commencement don't announce your handicap as either more or less than what it is at home, whatever your views upon the accuracy of the latter may be. If you say your handicap is more than it really is, you are grossly dishonest and a cheat, though some misguided players do so without any full sense of the grave responsibility of their action. On the other hand, many players with the best of motives say they are several strokes less than they really are, for the purpose of seeing what they can really do at a shorter handicap, and thus, as they put it, pull their game out. They also do it with the object of getting better matches, but their sins will find them out. They may very likely lose most of their matches, and their opponents, perhaps, will not care to play with them again, wanting something more to do. Besides, they may run up against some of their own club fellows, and then they may look rather foolish.

"Don't give your newly-made opponent-friend a

long account of your many brilliant performances on your home course, particularly if the account is by way of being an excuse for your falling off on the present occasion. The probability is that he will take a large discount off your story, and in any case he doesn't care an old gutta what you do at home.

"Also, don't make the shocking mistake of discussing with him the play and the manners of other visitors to the course with whom you have been having matches, or whom you have otherwise encountered on the green. It is very bad form, and, besides, after you have been denouncing some person or other, your companion may inform you that he is a friend of his.

"Don't ask permission of your opponent to take your wife or your sister or your mother round the links with you to watch the match, even with the proviso that she shall keep at a convenient distance from you both. Like the good fellow he is sure to be, he will say at once that he will be delighted, and will be most agreeable. But would you be delighted, and would you play your best game in such circumstances? Would not the presence of a lady stranger rather irritate you, however gallant you might desire to be? And what if all the players on the links did this kind of thing? The proper place for ladies who do not play golf is the sea-shore.

"Do please remember that as a visitor to the links, even though you are made a temporary member, you have no *right* to be there, and are only admitted to the course by the courtesy of the members. This is a point in manners which is

far too often neglected, and when the neglect is carried to an extreme the golfer may find his application for temporary membership refused another season. There must be no arrogance in your conduct in the clubhouse or on the green. Do not complain about the food or about the state of the course. You are not obliged to eat or to play there, and the members have got on very well in the past without you, and will doubtless survive your departure.

"Likewise remember that others who are playing on the course have at least as much right to do so as you, even if in your opinion they do not play such a high-class game as you do. Therefore don't get into the habit of calling out 'Fore!' to the couple in front unless it is absolutely necessary to do so, and don't complain loudly that people who take four putts on the green have no business to come to such good courses and interfere with the play of others.

"Assume that your opponent, though you do not know him well, is both a gentleman and a sportsman, as it is extremely likely is the case, and don't allow any contrary idea to enter your mind unless the evidence in favour of it is overwhelming. Then say nothing about your suspicions, but simply make a convenient excuse when he asks you for another match.

"If a point of difficulty occurs in the course of your match, do not squabble with your opponent about the rules or stubbornly maintain your own position against his arguments. It is better to waive your point and even lose a hole than do so. You are unlikely to convince him, and it is quite possible that you yourself are in the wrong. Besides, you will score most

heavily by gracefully waiving what you feel is your right. He will feel that afterwards.

"When you are leaving at the end of your holiday, do not forget to tender your best thanks to those to whom they are due. When you get home again don't tell untruths about the great things you have done while on your holiday. The people to whom you tell them will not believe you. Indeed, you must be very careful as to how you tell the good part of the truth."

V

When you are one of a special party that sets out for a sojourn at some place, solely for the reason of the golf that it affords, and when in due course, the time having been well and enjoyably spent on the links, your friends determine that they will return home or depart to some other place for golf, do not on any account yield to an impulse to stay behind them, on feeling that you could enjoy still a little more play, and persuading yourself that among the people you know who are staying in the place you may make up good matches. There will be no further enjoyment, for all the days that follow will suffer in comparison with those full ones that were spent when those bosom companions helped to the happiness in every hour. The course will not be the same; there will be a ghostly silence about the rooms of your lodging place, and the atmosphere of the town or village may seem unfriendly or at least indifferent; whereas before, in the independence of your association, you had not cared what it was, but formed a vague impression that the people were pleasantly conspir-

ing to add to the comfort and the pleasure of this expedition.

On the first morning afterwards it does really seem that all the people who had stayed there had gone also, and not merely the three who had come with you. You breakfast perhaps alone in a vast apartment. The head waiter seems to mix a great sympathy with his attentions, suggesting that he appreciates the loneliness and the misery of your bereavement. Out of this wretched place to the clubhouse, and there is no one there, and the obliging secretary or steward is unable to give any definite information as to the prospects of a morning match. You take out a young professional, and, well though he plays, a poor thing is this match with him in comparison with those that were of the days before, when you knew always the thoughts and fears that were passing through the mind of your opponent, and knew almost as well as your own, the clubs with which he played his shots, and exactly how they did their work. The ghosts of your friends seem to walk in front of you down the fairway leading to every hole, and as you leave the putting green and go forward moodily to the next tee, there is the shadow form of one of them pointing with his club to the exact spot where you remember his ball was teed yesterday, and you feel momentarily a happier man as you think you can see his characteristic swing and the glint of joy that comes into his eyes as he finds he has made the carry that it needed a strong heart to attempt with this wind blowing back from the green. You do not wish to appear inconsiderate, and not to show yourself as a man of proper feeling and a good sportsman in the presence of another who can

hardly display any open resentment at your attitude, but you cannot help this walking moodily and listlessly to the tee, as if not caring anything for the game that is in progress. There is no familiar talk on the old familiar topics. It is a relief when the match is ended, and you feel less pain at being beaten at the thirteenth hole than you have done for a long time.

"I can get a good match for you this afternoon, sir," says that excellent steward when you go back into the clubhouse. "Oh, thanks very much, Brown," you say, "but it doesn't matter. I think I shall go back this afternoon." And by the afternoon train you go, and as you are whirled along the seashore and through the open country and the tunnels, a first thought is that yesterday at the same time those three merry fellows were running along the same course, and were perhaps seated in that very carriage. They have gained a day on you in everything. Next time, my friends, we will all go back together.

VI

The customary classification of our golf courses into the inland and seaside groups is crude and inadequate. Apart from that there are many inland courses, and still more seaside courses, that differ from each other more than some in the one class differ from the others in the second one. The golfer of experience comes subconsciously to put all the courses that he knows well into different groups, those in each group having some distinguishing characteristic that specially appeals to his fancy or

his style of play. The student of golfing architecture has no difficulty in separating the links that we know best into four or five clearly distinguished classes, or schools as we might call them. The contour and peculiarities of the country over which the course is laid are largely instrumental in determining the class to which each one belongs, but the hand of man makes the final decision, and so it is that on many good courses we have the quality exposed and the temperaments suggested of the great golfing architects of dying and dead generations. It may be that they had very unpliant materials with which to work ; but after all in the planning of most holes there are two or three alternatives. One designer would determine that the golfers on his course should play over a high sand hill, while another would have inclined to avoiding it or fashioning another hole from another tee which would take the player round it.

One of the foremost of these schools of golf architecture is the Heroic. The name has only to be given, and every golfer of experience knows at once what links he would select as belonging to it—links with a fine length and needing a strong arm and a brave heart for successful play upon them, links which are broad and bold in their characteristics, never easy, and terribly difficult when Nature is in a tantrum mood. There are not so many drive and pitch holes on such courses, and when one is encountered the pitch calls for the most thoughtful golf. There are long, bare, bunkered holes that chill the blood of the nervous golfer as he goes forth from the tee with a glance at the brasseys in his bag. It seems as if he wanders into a vast space, a wilderness

where the littleness of man is emphasised. As a leading example of golfing architecture of the Heroic school, I would select the fine course at Deal, and another noble specimen is Prestwick. There is a disposition in these times to make some new inland courses on such models so far as limited natural opportunities permit, and much the best of those that have been created so far is Walton Heath, where it is really Heroic golf all the way from the first tee to the home green.

A school which has yielded many fine courses is the Romantic. The lights and shades of such courses are in high contrast, and their colouring is rich. Hazards, big and full of character of their own, abound at almost every hole; there are rocks or sandhills everywhere, and likely enough the course is set in a frame of rich scenery surrounding. Some people would describe such courses as being "very sporting." When one thinks of the Romantic school, and of the great days of adventure that one has spent when paying homage to its dead masters, one thinks of Troon and of North Berwick; and if of this type one must select one that is away from the sea, there is Sunningdale which clearly belongs to it, though its features are not so highly developed. The Braid Hills course is certainly attached to the Romantic school. The architects who were of this school, and the men who most admire their work, are warm-blooded, human players, who like risks and the overcoming of them, and who would have their pulses throb with the joy of life when they play on the links. They like, as it is said, to be called upon to take their lives in their hands at every stroke of their play. This is great golf.

As to which of all the schools provides the truest golf it is hard to say, since few men would agree on what is the truest golf. But quite likely the links of the Æsthetic school would be most frequently mentioned in this connection. There has been a subtle art at work in the planning of every hole. The architects have taken their patch of land, and, scorning all convention, have been inspired by great impulses in the selection and arrangement of the line of play. They have had moods and caprices, but they have been men of great genius, born and bred in a high atmosphere of the game. Like all other men of great independence of thought and action, they court and receive severe criticism; but at the end of it all the greatness, the superbness of the work is admitted, and its fame will for ever endure. There is character in it at every glance, but it is not such as is obtrusive, as at Troon. Here there is the perfect art that conceals art, and it is a testimony to its perfection that men go on discussing it for ever and ever, just as they still think and worry over the emotions that passed through the mind of Hamlet, and are not all agreed upon them. How many different readings, as it were, can one not give to a hole at St. Andrews—almost any hole on the old course. St. Andrews is the masterpiece of the Æsthetic school—profound, ingenious, intricate. Here and there we see a little of the influence of the Heroic school; the Romantic has had less. But always the Æsthetic school is a law unto itself, and its finished work is not to be likened to that of any other. Hoylake is of this school, though the example is not so pure and unaffected by the two great rival branches of architectural art as St. Andrews. Nevertheless it is

distinctly *Æsthetic*, and there is no other course that is worthy of inclusion in this particular class.

We have another school, which should be called the Victorian. It has many merits, and it is very prolific. It represents a sober and industrious kind of golf, but it is utterly lacking in any inspiration. It is as business like and exact as you please, a six-o'clock-sharp morning-dress kind of golf. It conduces to good habits, and will make some good golfers. But on the whole it is rather prim and dull, and one never feels the blood running in the veins when contemplating it. Muirfield is one of the Victorian school, and there are one or two of the satellites of Hoylake, on its own seaboard, that are of it also. Sandwich has much of the Victorian element in it; but it is redeemed by the strong influence of other schools, as by the extreme romanticism of the Maiden. The suburbs in their own small way went over to Victorianism entirely at the outset, partly because their circumstances exerted such an irresistible tendency in that direction. A drive over one bunker and a pitch over the next one is Victorianism in its crudest form; but perhaps after all the suburbs are lucky in being able to attach themselves to any school. I am told that the Victorian school has had paramount influence in America.

VII

Of the links we know, those by the sea, to which do we return for the tenth or the twentieth time joyously as to a delightful friend in a charming home? Instantly we murmur the name of dear North Berwick. The

old player has conviction in this immediate choice by instinct, though the question is not one which he answers lightly. In his heart he has corners for many old loves, and as he brings each one up for contemplation and counts her many charms, he thinks that surely she is the fairest of them all. But inevitably when they have all been passed in review his fancy brings him back to one, and he clings to the remembrance of her, confessing that she is not like the others. There is a subtlety in her charm, a fascination in her manners, an "altogether" which cannot be resisted. She is gentler than St. Andrews, a sweet innocent maiden wading with bare feet among the rocks of the Haddington coast, whom you love to tease and toy with; while my lady of Fifeshire is colder and of great dignity and compelling attractions. It is a fine sea at North Berwick, and though in the play one may think little enough of the sea, it is good to have the wavelets kissing the pebbles hard by an occasional green, and to hear their soothing lapping. The sound is grateful to the hard-tried nerves. There are few parts of the North Berwick course where one cannot see a little of the ocean, while here and there, such as at Point Garry and Perfection, the greens are placed in enchanting spots. Then the air is like wine. At North Berwick one is in East Lothian, in the centre of the finest golfing country in the world. In two or three weeks one may tire of the same links, the monotony of the same round, the same bunkers, the same greens. Here there are many others at hand, and all within the shortest of journeys. Chiefly there is Gullane the grand. When you are at Gullane you may think it is better than North Berwick as a place to stay and holiday in. It is quieter, quainter, more

old fashioned, a trifle more like the country, and the golf is glorious. Such is the turf on old Gullane, that one feels that one should never tread upon the greens save in stockinged feet. And the man who has not captured the eighth and ninth up the hill in 4's, and then on the summit stood hard by the Roundell to survey the finest panorama to be seen on a golf course, and taste the finest air, has something yet to know of the utmost pleasures of a golfer's existence. Then there are Muirfield, and Archerfield, Kilspindie, and all the rest of them, so near that strong men have played on the whole collection in one day. But when you go back to North Berwick in the evening you think you will stay there still. You like the comfort of the place, and the green, and you want your Bass Rock.

It is the place to conjure up a mental picture of some great events of days gone by, as :

It is nearly sixty years ago, and there is tense excitement on the seven-hole course, as it was in those far-off days. A great foursome is being played, and there is £400 at issue. Old Tom and Allan Robertson are on one side, and the Dunns are against them on the other. They have played over two other greens and are even, and now they are to decide. The Dunns have had a great lead, but at the second last hole in the fifth and last round the game is square. Then the Dunns' ball lodges behind a stone, and the brothers are in a frenzy, and lose their heads in several vain endeavours to extricate it. Old Tom and Allan are dormy, and the £400 goes to them at the last hole.

This picture fades away, and another framed in mournful black comes up in its place. Old Tom and

his boy, the great Young Tom, are on the green, matched against old Willie Park and Mungo Park. Some news comes. It is bad news. It is taken to the green, and the others bow their heads for a moment but say nothing to the boy. But as soon as may be they take him off the links, and put him in a sailing boat to sail across the water with Old Tom, his father, to St. Andrews on the Fifeshire coast. And there he reels as he looks upon the pallid face of his much-beloved wife, her head laid upon a pillow, and the eyelids closed in death. Young Tom's own death-warrant was signed that moment. The golfing history of North Berwick is full of the romance of the game.

VIII

In many sequestered places there are fine courses that the golfer in general knows little of. Demand of him suddenly that he shall tell you of a far-away seaside links where you may rest and play for a little while until the city calls you back, and by force of habit he will begin to murmur pleasantly about his Carnousties and his Gullanes and all the rest. They are excellent, most excellent ; but we call for change, and where for the old wanderer is the change that is good enough? When he appeals to you, send him down in a cab to Paddington, bidding him take a ticket to Porthcawl, changing at Cardiff, for you may know that in the evening he will be happy, and that upon the next day the joy of life will have come again to a weary worker.

Porthcawl is a place that rests the man and gives

balm to his troubled spirit. There is a fine links and the open Atlantic, and the Cymric spell is cast upon the sojourner—the feeling that one has relapsed from the severity of complicated civilisation for a little while to the peace and the simplicity of old Gwalia, the land of the real Briton. One day I was turning the pages of a small guide-book to South Wales, when I noticed that the topographer, in writing of Porthcawl, said somewhat complainingly that the coast round about there was “extremely desolate.” Beyond hinting that there were more rocks about it than were good for any well-ordered coast, he preferred not to go into details. He was describing things for the benefit of that curious person who is generally called “the tourist,” and he seemed to feel this was no place for him to linger with his charge. So in apologetic manner he gave his reader a small assortment of the usual kind of facts as an excuse for having mentioned Porthcawl at all. He told him, for example, that the novelist, R. D. Blackmore, who was a word scene-painter of breadth and effectiveness, placed the action of his “Maid of Sker” in this region of Porthcawl, and if he had had consideration for the golfer he would have added that there are landmarks of the story to be seen from all parts of the links. The tourist was further informed as to a local church, was acquainted with the curious fact that here there is a well of fresh water which rises and falls in a puzzling manner according to the going out and coming in respectively of the tide, and was supplied with some useful and indispensable knowledge about the character of the shipping with which the port had to deal. And then, as it was felt that the tourist must not tarry longer in such a place, he

was hurried on to some other, where there were piers and bands, and a variety of historic remains for contemplation and study in serious moments.

Generally the requirements of the golfer are in inverse ratio to those of the tourist, and it is tolerably safe to predict that when a coast is described as "extremely desolate," it represents a fine piece of golfing country. It is one of the good things of golf that it has come into our civilisation to use up all utterly barren and waste tracts of coastwise land, and that generally the more barren and waste the better they are for golf. Are not some of the best links there are in Britain situated on coasts that are to the non-golfing mind, uneducated to the beauty and charm of testing, full-blooded and yet scrupulously fair holes, quite naked of all attraction? And what an excellent arrangement of circumstances it is! The neighbourhood of Prestwick is sometimes by way of being "boomed" as a health resort, a place that affords a fine tonic to the lungs, and I believe the claim is well justified; but not all people would describe this spot in Ayrshire as being "interesting," and there is certainly no kind of relation between the quality of the coast scenery and the inestimable grandeur, from the golfing point of view, of the Cardinal, the Himalayas, and above all of the glorious seventeenth, the Alps. And consider Sandwich. No tourist of discrimination has been seen, or will be, on these reclaimed wastes that have already given us one championship course, and lately a new links, which is of superlative quality. And the "extremely desolate" coast at Porthcawl which did not please our guide-book man, is found on acquaintance to be an excellent example of

Nature's impressionist seascape work, with savage rocks abounding. Even the name of Porthcawl smacks of coves and pirates, of breezes and big seas. Porthcawl sticks out so that there is nothing in the world between it and the United States of America except the Atlantic Ocean. Its golf links are on the very margin of the sea, contiguous to those black, sharp rocks — so near, indeed, that a really badly-hit ball may sometimes be sent dancing at all kinds of fantastic angles from one to another, until it comes to rest in an inaccessible place whence it will never be disturbed. Sometimes in the severer seasons, the sea, with the full, unbroken force of the Atlantic behind it, will be sent smashing along over the rocks, and even over the golf links too, until some of the bunkers are laden with salt water. Porthcawl is fine, and it is a fine change, and there are holes on the course that have a boldness and a vigour that stir the pulse of the golfing man. We play over the wall and up the hill to the turn, and there is South Wales and its ocean frame spread out at our feet, making us linger upon a glorious scene and sigh a little as we drive down the hillside to the first hole in.

IX

It is fine golf that is to be had now on Kent's eastern seaboard, and each time one comes down into this neighbourhood with one's bag of clubs, the more one is strengthened in the conviction as to its equal excellence with any other golfing district in the world, and the abundance of its fine prospects for the future. The magnificent character of the golf, chiefly

that which is enjoyed under the authority of the Cinque Ports Club at Deal, is becoming better known and appreciated year by year, and even now the feeling is general that here is one of the finest links that were ever made for a championship to be played upon. The sister course of the Royal St. George's Club is practically joined up to it, and now a little farther along the bay in the direction of Ramsgate is the new course of the Prince's Club, and a very fine course too. So here we have strung together along a small stretch of coast three of the very best courses that are to be found in the whole world of golf—one which is actually a championship course, a second which is perhaps by way of being so, and a third which may soon be mentioned in the same connection. There is enough good golfing land left in Pegwell Bay to make a fourth course, and some day not very far distant it may be made. Nature has here given to the golfer every natural advantage that it is possible to afford him in the preparation of those seaside links, the contemplation of which brings the light of pleasure into his eyes. Golf is great in our modern scheme of things, and some have said, without irreverence, that they see the shaping hand of Providence in short holes of such sporting quality as the Maiden and the Sandy Parlour, in those glorious last four holes at Deal, and in all that bumpy ground to be covered in approach play which calls for such an abundant exercise of the wits of the thoughtful golfer, and inevitably recalls to him some of the best characteristics of St. Andrews. So much, indeed, does all this place look as if it were made for golf, and intended to be a capital of golf, that a man with whom I played there once was led, while we were

waiting at one of the tees, to the remark that if golf had never been invented it would surely have come to be so as soon as intelligent men had wandered hereabouts, so direct is the suggestion that is made by the nature and the contour of the land. One finds it difficult—nay, even impossible—to think of a better stretch of golfing land in the whole of England or Scotland, or anywhere where there are three links of this quality joined up to each other, so that, if so whimsically disposed, a golfer might play on from one to the other, and make a triple round of fifty-four holes.

Here, then, is a place which is eminently adapted to become a leader among golfing centres, and it would surprise no one if, at an early stage of the further evolution of golf and golfing matters, it came to be regarded as the chief of all. It is not to be overlooked that it enjoys the inestimable advantage of proximity to London. When London takes a fancy to such a thing as golf she likes to be its master, and will leave nothing undone to assert her supremacy. She has taken to golf, and Scotland already knows with what masterful zeal she is pursuing it. These seaside links of eastern Kent are to all intents and purposes London links, in that they are nearer than any other to London, and are fed almost exclusively from the capital. And a further advantage that the place possesses is in the fine bracing air with which it is enveloped, air which for its invigorating properties is hardly to be excelled anywhere in Great Britain. When the wind comes from the south-east with moderate strength, as it so often does down there, it is a fine thing for the golfer, and a stimulant not only to himself but his game.

The locality begins to feel, as one might say, like a great golfing centre. You know how St. Andrews and Carnoustie and North Berwick "feel" like that. The intelligent interest of the non-golfing people in the towns and villages round about is being awakened in the game, and they are all discovering in some way or other how they may make themselves to benefit by it. Particularly is this the case with regard to a certain good class of private hotels and boarding-houses catering specially, if not exclusively, for golfers. In all the great centres of the game one finds these places in abundance, and every player of experience knows how, in many respects, they are often to be preferred to the big hotels. Then we find a leading thoroughfare called Golf Road, houses called Golf Villas, establishments named Golf Bakeries and Golf Laundries, all of which little details are a sign that the game is coming to be regarded in the district as an "industry," and the district is wise in arriving at such an understanding in good time. Moreover, one would be inclined to say that the standard of play down here is at least as high, taking it all round, as it is at any other big golfing centre. There are fozzlers on every links, but more men with very short handicaps, men who have really come to grips with the game, are playing round Pegwell Bay than in most parts, chiefly because, whether member or visitor, the expense of playing is considerable, and the play itself is difficult, and the long-handicap men have discovered that there is not much fun in paying high rates for the privilege of spending week-ends in bunker practice. And yet another attribute of the large and important golfing centre does this neighbourhood possess, in the good quality of the caddies which in

the course of many seasons it has at last developed. A man once said that if he saw the caddies beforehand he could tell what kind of golf was played in a place, and though this may have been going too far, there was a germ of truth in the idea. Mediocre links and mediocre players never produce good caddies, and the reverse argument generally holds good; and everybody knows that a good race of caddies is not to be produced in a couple of seasons. Oftentimes it needs at least a generation. But the caddies at Deal and Sandwich nowadays are excellent, and this is not such an unimportant matter as some people might imagine it to be.

X

When you think of it, there is no inconsiderable portion of our golfing lives that is spent in travelling to and from the links that are far from home, by railway and by motor-car, and if one falls into a reflective mood there are many experiences, some curious and some trying, that are to be called to mind in connection with these journeys. On the whole, perhaps, the reflection does not make for much joy, except in the knowledge that these are things of the past and are not likely to be repeated. When the assemblies for the championships are being made, there is less talk of current form than there is of adventures in travelling. Oh, the horrors of a wait at Dumfries in the small hours of a cold morning, when the mistake has been made of trying to get to Prestwick that way! Turned out from the comfortable, warm, snug sleeping-car at Carlisle, even the

blanket and pillow that were vouchsafed to you on parting from the express are begrudged you now at this most icy, inhospitable Dumfries. With that curious, dirty, dazed feeling as of being a boiled owl, you watch the men throw the mails into the van that is to take them and you on to Ayr, and listen to them joking about the events of the previous night as if it were now really morning. You tell everybody what you think about Scottish common sense in not having a fire in any waiting-room and no place available for any refreshment, and the Scots themselves are too courteous to say what they must think of your common sense for a golfer in making this journey in this weird way. Then you get into a smelly, dirty carriage, and with jerks and jolts the train drags itself out of the station and slowly away along the line. Stop, stop, stop every two or three miles, but at last it is Ayr, and the worn-out golfer, cursing himself for his folly and others for their heathenism, gets out and steps forth into the land of Burns. But it is yet only a little past five o'clock, and all Ayr is fast asleep, and there are no fires, no refreshments, and no ways of getting to Prestwick just yet. This is to be a golfer! But all things end sometime except eternity, and at last you are at Prestwick, and the finest thing you ever did in your life was then to keep your first ball straight and uninfluenced by the gravestones in the churchyard, and to squeeze a heartening if a little fluky 3 at this first hole. My reader, be assured that the night train through Carlisle, and changing there and at Dumfries, is not the way to go to the west coast of Scotland where are Prestwick and Troon. Run through to Glasgow and down again, as indeed everybody but those crazy people who

are always finding new ways of doing things, always do.

But generally night-travelling is an excellent thing when you get used to it, and it spares a day to golf. It is a fine thing to pack your bag of clubs away lovingly in your berth after a dinner at the London terminus, and before you turn off the light you look at them and think a "Good-night!" to them in a cheery way as of old and trusted companionship. "Off again, my friends!" you seem to say. "We have done this sort of thing before, eh? We know what we are going to do, you and I, eh? Yes, you are the fellows. Bonny boys, you are! Where? Didn't you know? Why, North Berwick, of course! Now, bye-bye! Let's sleep. Play in the morning." And then you switch off the light, and slip away into dreamland where there are glorious holes on seaside courses, and presently there is a big thump on the door and that dream is spoiled and dispelled by a man's gruff voice. But the next moment is one of those most worth living. The dream is realised or is in the realisation, for the caller brings you to your joyful senses by declaring that in fifteen more minutes you will be wheeling into Edinburgh. In those dreams which were helped by a soothing lullaby from the wheels below, the London was slipping away four hundred miles from the tail of the train, and here is Golf, its own rare land.

And what feats one can perform on a motor-car! And does. Just finished our putts on the home green at St Andrews, and the sun going down, and up comes one of our impulsive party and says it is ordered that we go to Gullane to-night by car! Goodness! But it has to be, and in half an hour we

are bowling along those Fifeshire roads, and we are ferried across from Burntisland in the gloom and run into Edinburgh. Good supper, some talk in a tone of suppressed excitement as if great adventures are afoot—as they are—and history is being made, and then we hoot-hoot away into the blackness of the night. And it is black farther on. And the blacker it is the faster that dare-devil man at the wheel makes her go. Running along roads the width of the car and stone walls on either side, while branches of trees are almost scraping the tops of our heads, and one might swear the speed-gauge has its finger on the fifty. “Mrs. Forman’s!” you say to the man beside you, to show you are not thinking of the awful risks as we dash by Musselburgh. Farther on a cap is lost in the black and windy night, but nobody complains. It is enough that all survived that terrible twist round the corner at Gosford. Aberlady! That is a fine thing to hear. “Will you stop here to-night, or come on to Gullane?” It is the end. You have indeed come through a great ordeal, and it is a great thing to be standing there in the night with your bag of clubs under your arm, and to be able to answer a greeting as it ought to be, and to let your thoughts slip away soon to the golf of the morning that is coming.

XI

But it is clear to me that the golfer who wishes to go golfing, and at the same time to live the richest and most adventurous life of the traveller, needs to take himself abroad and roam from course to course in Eastern and Central America. He will encounter

many incidents that will interest and enliven him, as did the four eminent British professionals who some time since made a golfing expedition from here in the winter-time in search of Mexican treasure—dollars that were offered in open competition at San Pedro. They told me a great tale of their adventures on their return, and, as I have reason to believe, a strictly accurate one. Andrew Kirkaldy, Alexander Herd, Jack White, and Rowland Jones were the treasure-hunters, and dashing fellows they seemed as they boarded a special express at New York. Having started thence at five minutes to eleven one Wednesday morning, the train reached St. Louis at 1.30 on Thursday, having been much delayed by a wreck on the Wabash in which fourteen persons were killed and injured. This news added greatly to the discomfort of the four British golfers. They lunched at the Planters' Hotel, went round the city, saw a performance at the theatre, and boarded the train again at half-past eight in the evening. Thereafter Messrs. Kirkaldy, Herd, White, and Jones were brought to realise some of the possibilities of travelling in through trains along the American Continent. They were in the last car of the train, and after the journey had been resumed about half an hour, there was a negative kind of happening in the form of a gradual slowing down and then a final stop of the train—or rather, as it proved, of the carriage. After waiting a little while in patience the party put their heads out of the window, and then they came to realise the horrible truth. Their carriage had become uncoupled, and the train had gone on and left them! Here was a state of things! There was no other train to

get them through in time. Hundreds of pounds were to be picked up at San Pedro, and they would not be there to pick them up as they had intended. The prizes would have been a gift for them, and either "Andra" or Rowland Jones would have become an open champion of sorts at last. When these thoughts had chased each other through the minds of the great British quartette for half an hour, someone got up aloft, and, like the widow Twankey—or Sister Anne was it?—in the pantomime, said that he thought he saw something coming. Immediately afterwards he confessed he was mistaken, but he had scarcely admitted the mistake when the original statement was renewed with vigour. There *was* something, and eventually it was made out as a railway train. The four great British golfers were saved for Mexico, and they would yet win championships and dollars—at least they might do, as they might now prefer to put it. It seemed that after the train had parted company with its last carriage, in about a quarter of an hour somebody in the moving section happened to notice the circumstance, and remarked that it was rather curious that a carriage should be left down the line in that manner, and that there should be no fuss made. The matter being reported to the officials on the train they decided to put back and see if they could find the carriage containing, among others, the party of four great British golfers. As we have already seen, they did so. Then the whole train moved on again towards Mexico, and "Andra" went to sleep in his berth dreaming, perhaps, of the old course at home and of his doing the home hole in 2.

The four British golfers found things rather dull for the next two days, for nothing in particular happened while they were running through fifteen hundred miles of woods and prairie. On Saturday morning they got out of the train at San Antonio, Texas, in time for breakfast, and the same evening they reached Laredo, the Mexican border, where their luggage was examined. Spanish being the prevailing language, this process proved rather troublesome, especially as the officials had varying and peculiar views as to the goods on which duty should be paid. Some of the party had to pay it on their golf clubs, and others escaped. The train had hardly got going again when it was pulled up on account of an obstruction in front, and it was three hours before a further advance was made, the impediment being a freight-train which had run off the track. By this time Kirkaldy was sighing for a ride on the North British, and White was hoping that he might be allowed the privilege of making his last journey on earth on the beautiful South-Western. But there was more adventure to come.

The four great British golfers had heard awful tales of Mexicans and what they were capable of, but they understood the place was more civilised now—must be, as there was golf there. In the dead of night, while the famous quartette were wrapped in slumber, when White found himself back on to his drive, when Herd had nothing but good luck for a whole season, when Jones was pipping one Braid for the championship nearly every time, and when the fourth of the party of British golfers was doing a round on the links in

Elysium in eighteen under par—there were robbers going through the car! They were real robbers, such as are commonly found on these trains in these parts. They went through the train “in the most approved style,” as it was said of them, and before the first streaks of the Mexican dawn had lit up the sky there were many men in that golfing train who were much poorer than when they went to sleep. One of the Boston amateurs going to the same tournament lost six hundred dollars, his gold watch, and trunk checks, and several others found that various sums of money belonging to them had disappeared. And how fared the four British golfers? Was it for fear of him, for respect, or for admiration, that the Mexican robber did not concern himself at all with the great British golfer? In due course they landed at Mexico City on Monday morning. The four British golfers were much impressed by the peculiar dress of the Mexicans, which they even found to be affected by the caddies. Andrew spoke a few preliminary words of greeting to the boys, but they only smiled, not understanding Scotch. But they showed a strong disposition to be good friends, an attitude which, as was subsequently discovered, was not entirely because they were great golfers. Caddies are much the same the wide world over. Of the further pursuit of the treasure by the four great British golfers, and of their many disappointments, the story has been already told.

XII

A celebrated golfer, being in one of his lighter moods, discussed with me the future association of aeroplanes and golf, and he observed that when the flying machines came they would be such boons and blessings to the golfing fraternity above all others as nobody imagined at the present time. He opined that no sooner did the flying machine become workable and reliable than every golfer who considered himself at all thorough, and took any proper care of his game, would think it his bounden duty to possess one. It would be as necessary to the playing of his true game as the nails in the soles of his boots and shoes, and he would be just as seriously handicapped without the one as the other. This was a startling proposition; but though it was a great exaggeration of an idea, the idea itself was sound, and was based on the wisest and most generally-accepted philosophy. It was submitted that the aeroplane would be very good for golf, inasmuch as it would do less towards putting a man off his game at the beginning of the day than any other form of locomotion from his place of residence to the golf course.

It is a disturbing reflection that practically everything that one does in these days that is not golf tends to injure one's golf. Nothing has ever been discovered that with any consistency and regularity will improve it, except golf; the effect is always adverse, and perhaps this trying jealousy of the game adds something to its general fascination.

Usually a more or less lengthy journey has to be made from the golfer's home to the first tee, and it is this which is so much calculated to disturb his playing temperament. No matter how you make this journey it must be bad for your game, and the only difference between one way and another is in the degree of badness.

When a man has risen from his bed in the morning, thoroughly roused himself, and noticed that it is a fine day, he is at his best for golfing. After that all things put him off. Some authorities are very adverse to the cold bath, and others have even said that one's breakfast ought not to be regarded as an absolutely loyal friend. But it is the journey to the links—with all its delays, irritations, inconveniences, and joltings—that does the most damage. Frequently this journey is a mixture of cabs, omnibuses, and trains. At one point or another you have very likely to run for either the omnibus or the train, and this is certain to do something towards putting you off. It may be only a little, but it is this trifle added to other similar trifles that make up a total sufficient to bring disaster to your driving and putting. If you do not need to run anywhere, you have to wait, and this irritates and does harm. Then the great vibration of the cab and the omnibus most seriously affect the nervous system.

The golfer may not be conscious of it, but the effect is there. How true this is may be judged by taking the extreme case of the motor-bicycle. A year or two ago large numbers of golfers who could not afford motor-cars went in for the cheaper kind of machine, but to a man they found them quite fatal to golf, and particularly to their putting, the vibration

having reduced their nerves to such a state that delicacy of touch on the putting green was next to impossible. Ordinary bicycles are nearly as bad. In many respects motor-cars have great advantages, and have become very popular with golfers, but they are far from being the ideal form of locomotion. Here, again, there is vibration, and if you have anything in the nature of a fright on the road you may generally reckon that your game for the day is damaged to the extent of a number of strokes that varies with the individual. Having all these things and many more in mind, the superiority of the aeroplane, from the golfer's point of view, becomes evident. It will take you from your door to the first tee, and, as there are no roads to jolt upon, one conceives that in the perfect aeroplane there will be no vibration, and, barring the effects of his breakfast, the golfer will be transported to the links in as nearly as possible the ideal state in which he rose from his bed.

XIII

Some footpaths count for very much in the playing of a hole, and at times call for and produce fine shots that would never be made if there were no path there. So sometimes they are good to the game; but generally they are merely an aggravation. You could hardly call a path or a road famous, but if you were asked which were the most notable you would probably call to mind first of all the path that goes across the first and eighteenth holes at St. Andrews, which is distinguished from others because of the devil-may-care spirit in which the general public

defy injury and death by the way they saunter along it when such men as Edward Blackwell are standing on the first tee, and it is also a path among paths, because it has led to the cultivation of the most magnificent voice ever heard on any golf course. The man who has not heard Starter Greig fire his blast of warning through the hole in his box down the fairway—with a clap, and a bang against the horizon, for all the world like a discharge from a small brass gun—is still ignorant of one of the minor wonders of the golf world, and has a very inadequate perception of the possibilities of calling "Fore!" Likewise, one would say that of all roads—as superior to mere paths—that which skirts the seventeenth green on the same old course is the most remembered by the majority of good golfers—remembered sadly. How many golfers have had their brightest hopes dashed by that road when within sight of home and victory it would be a sorry task to count, but there lingers in my mind a dreadful scene when J. H. Taylor's ball went there in the course of the 1905 championship meeting, from a not by any means unworthy shot, and of his trying, time after time, to get it back to the green, until when he had done so his nerves were tingling as would have been those of any man.

The paths and roads of Blackheath are altogether probably responsible for the making of a bigger and more enduring piece of golfing history than any others. Other footways may have despoiled great players of deserved honours, but thus their effects are chiefly destructive, and it cannot be claimed for them that they have made anything for the game. But the Blackheath paths and roads have been

constructive in their effect upon the game, for they made the brassey. There is a fair consensus of opinion that this most necessary of modern clubs was first introduced on this course as a consequence of these paths and roads that had to be played from, and also partly on account of the gritty nature of the turf. In those days of the use of the brassey, when a Blackheath golfer appeared on a Scottish course, the caddies knew his headquarters at once. "He comes frae Blackheath," they would say with some deprecation. "There's naething but gravel pits and stones at Blackheath."

XIV

However humble its merits may be, it is well that a man should be faithful always to his mother course, respectful of her, and that he should not speak and very tardily admit to himself the blemishes of her features. For it is always for him to remember that she, and she alone, gave the game to him that has yielded him so much happiness, and he owes to her a debt that he can never repay, save in constancy and gratitude. Therefore it is to be reckoned as a good thing in a golfer that, wherever the necessities and vicissitudes of life may take him to live, and for whatever other courses he may in mature years find a fondness and become attached to by membership, he should, if he can do it, always remain an associate of his first club, and should from time to time display some public attachment to its course, even though it be at some inconvenience to himself. It is a little act of filial homage that should not be neglected.

At such times he will be kind to her and will not chide her for her weaknesses. He will humour her good-naturedly. The sixteenth may be a better hole on another course, but do not say so now. Think how rich did that sixteenth here seem in those far-off days when the teething to the clubs was first being done. What terrors had its bunkers! What a big, lusty, and not to say a brutal one, did it seem then; but now to the time-worn golfer, if the truth must be whispered for once to himself, that old sixteenth seems something of a milksop, and can be played in ten different ways with a half-hearted drive and something of a mashie or iron. How happy we were despite the constant troubles in those olden days, when we were always with our mother links, and knew no others! The old men of golf came and told us of the great courses that they had encountered in their travels—such wonderful holes, such amazing bunkers, such marvellous putting greens! These travellers' tales were pleasant to listen to, and they fired the imagination; but after all we returned with some content to our mother links.

And then, what golfer does not remember the day, particularly if he was then no longer a child in years, when he went away for the first time from that course and paid a visit to one of those celebrated of which so much is written in the books and on which so many fine matches and championships are played? This is always an epoch, and a stirring one in every golfing life. There are many wild emotions in the man when for the first time he takes his club to play a shot on this foreign course of so much renown. If he is an intelligent man, and an impartial one, he sees the merit and the glory, and he admits it without

reservation. He feels that now he has gone out into the great world, and that there are more wonders in it than even his utmost fancy had suspected. He is like the Queen of Sheba who went to see the magnificence of Solomon, confessing then that it was a true report that she had heard in her own land, though she believed not until her eyes had seen, when she knew that the half had not been told her. Out alone on this wonderful course the feeling of loneliness and helplessness will come upon this immature player. Truly the half had not been told to him, and in mortal agony in some "Hell" or other, or in a Devil's Kitchen or a Punchbowl, or it may be in the sandy wastes of a Sahara or in a crevasse on the heights of the Alps or the Himalayas—how, then, will he be reminded of the tender indulgences of his mother links, of her constant kindness, and of the way in which she humoured his youthful caprice and smiled patiently upon him when he was fretful! Perhaps she was too indulgent, and the maternal laxness did something towards the spoiling of the child for the manhood that was to follow. But no matter, let the golfer always be kind and well disposed to his mother links.

THE SUNNY SEASON

I

ONE hears it said sometimes by versatile and thorough-going sportsmen, that of all the sweet sensations to be discovered and enjoyed occasionally in the whole world of sport, the hitting of a perfect tee shot is one of the best, one of the only two or three best. These men are probably right, for the hitting of a really spanking ball from the tee, when one feels the complete absence of a grating or a jerking anywhere in the system, showing that the whole of the most complicated movement has worked round the centre with the accuracy of a watch, and that every ounce of available power has thus been put into the drive to the greatest advantage—this is a fine thing to feel, and the pity is that the joy of it is so fleeting, and that the memory of it has entirely gone a few minutes later when some succeeding shot has not been quite so good.

But is there not another feeling which comes to a man in the game sometimes which is even more uplifting, much more so? It lasts longer, and it is fuller, richer. The man is then transformed, ether-ealised; he is no longer a thing of this crawling, walking world; and he is not a mere man on the links as he used to be, happy, indeed, for the most

part, but very human, with many adversities to encounter, as generally in this world. The man is raised for a while to the higher state, and his golfing soul floats in Valhalla when he is suddenly permitted to play many holes in succession better than he had ever played holes before—everything perfect, and a little more than perfect, which means fortunate all the way from the tee to the flag. It is one of those days which have been dreamt about and regarded as impossible, when the marvellous coincidence has occurred of the man being “on” everything at the same time, and of everything going right when he was thus on them. Aforetime it has been that when he was on six things a seventh has led him astray, and there has always been a seventh at least, if not another too. The factor of evil could never be cancelled. But this time it is, and it is as if the gods, smiling benevolently on the lucky and successful player, determine that he shall be happy to the utmost, and therefore they allow him all the good fortune that is theirs to give. The most perfect balls are driven from the tee, the most impossible carries are accomplished; there is a delightful crispness about the approaches, and the six-foot putts are holed with precision and confidence; while here and there, to the utter demoralisation of the arch enemy par, to say nothing of the poor man who is the human victim of it all, the long putts go down as well.

It is, perhaps, given to most players to be stirred with this indescribable joy once or twice in their lives—seldom more than that. It is not until three or four holes have been played that the full realisation of what is happening comes to the favoured player, and it is then that he is rapidly etherealised. His

joy may last for another four or five holes; it will seldom endure a round. I have seen men when they have been in this state and under this most extraordinary influence, and they have not then been as they are at other times. Their inward ecstasy shines outside them. There is a curious nervous smile on their faces, and their eyes gleam. Their steps are short and hurried. They seldom speak, and when they do there is a touch of incoherency in their remarks. It is best that they should not be spoken to. They are suffering from a curious dementia of exaltation. They have help from Olympus, and history is being made. When I have seen it done I have once or twice made a close study of the behaviour of the man, and I know that it is as I have written. One of the most memorable occasions on which I witnessed this super-exaltation was during an Open Championship at Sandwich, when records were being made, and when at last a fine amateur player seemed to set out towards the making of one more. Hole after hole was played with that combination of perfection and fortune, and at last the man fell under the influence, and you could see it in possession of him as he went tripping along. You knew that, phlegmatic as a golfer must be who aspires to the greatest achievements, and as this one often was even in the hour of crisis, his heart was now beginning to beat. Soon afterwards it was all over; there was an amazing catastrophe on a fiery putting green and four or five putts were needed there. Three years later I saw the same man with the exaltation in him again at Muirfield, when he went through to a great achievement. I shall not forget the look of that man when he was doing these things. It

is a chilly descent when the spell is broken, and it is all earth and clay again, but in the reaction there is no suffering. A happy reason comes to the rescue of the throbbing player, and he is reminded that such things are not to be for always, lest golf should not be what it is.

II

When the sun shines the putting greens get keen. There is an old saying that driving is an art, iron play a science, and putting is the devil. Just that—the devil. I agree entirely, and I have ascertained that the greatest exponents of the game are in sympathy with the suggestion.

Well may the writers of text-books of the game declare, when they come to the chapter on putting, that there is really nothing to say, and that they must leave the reader to find out the whole business by instinct and practice, as there are no rules to be laid down for his guidance. What would be the use of their pretending that they can really teach putting when, if they had to hole an eight-foot putt for a championship, the odds would be slightly against them? In June 1905, while I was smoking my pipe on the top of the bank on the far side of the home green at St. Andrews, I was being provided at intervals of no great length with much food for reflection and philosophy, better than which no man who ever talks or writes of golf could wish for. The Open Championship was being played for, and there duly came along Vardon, Braid, Taylor, and Herd, all more or less favourites for the event in progress, and it is a real fact that of these four men three of

them missed putts at this home hole of less than a yard. I think the average length was about eighteen inches; one of them was not more than a foot, and the way in which the ball was worked round to the far side of the hole without going in was wonderful—quite wonderful. It will be noticed that I give four names and mention only three misses. This is because even the greatest players are sometimes very tender on this subject of missing short putts, and to spare them any annoyance I do not name the particular individuals who failed. It is enough that one of them, and one only, did not.

The history of every man's golf is covered with metaphorical gravestones as the result of all the short putts he has missed. Every season the whole course, and the result of almost every event of importance, would be changed if one or other of the parties did not miss some of these apparently unmissable putts. One need go no farther back than last year's Amateur Championship meeting. I saw Mr. John Graham miss a two-foot putt in his match with Mr. Robb on the fourteenth green. This was the all-important match of the whole tournament, and in the light of what happened afterwards it was made to appear that the missing of this putt cost Mr. Graham the best chance he ever had in his hard and deserving golfing lifetime of winning the blue ribbon of the game. Mr. Robb himself fancied that Mr. Robert Andrew would be the ultimate winner of the championship that time at Hoylake, but on the eighteenth green in one of his rounds Mr. Andrew missed a putt of less than a foot for the match, and then had to go on to the nineteenth hole, where he was a well-beaten man. And in the final tie of all,

if Mr. Lingen had never missed a short putt, who knows but what he would have been the champion of the year after all?

Therefore we may take it as established that the very greatest players cannot do the very shortest putts with anything approaching to certainty, when it is of the very greatest importance that they should do so. They are no better at this game than quite moderate players, and the chances of their holing such putts decrease according to the importance of the occasion—that is to say, the more necessary it is to hole the putt in order to promote one's success in the encounter in progress, the less likely is one to do so. This is one of the fundamental principles of the thing. Anybody can hole a putt of four or five feet when it doesn't matter, and when there is no particular credit in doing it. It is when it does matter that you cannot do it. The hole is $4\frac{1}{4}$ in. wide, and the ball is about $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. in diameter. You may use anything from an umbrella to a lawn-roller in order to putt that little ball into that huge pit, and yet at that distance of three or four feet you cannot do it—that is, as often as you ought to do. Training and practice are no use. Do not beginners always do these putts well? That is because they do not know how difficult they are. They will by and by, and then they will begin to miss them! At home I have a little baby girl, and sometimes she gets one of my putters out of the corner, and begs for the loan of a ball. Make a sort of hole on the carpet, or even go out on to the lawn and play at a real hole in the real way, and that little thing will hole the putts of a yard and two yards every time! She never bothers about any particular stance or anything of that kind,

and takes no count of the blades of grass or where she ought to be looking at the much-talked-of "moment of impact." She just putts, and down goes the ball every time! It is wonderful, one of the most wonderful things in sport that I have ever seen! Here she does that, and we others who know so much about these things, cannot do them—at least, not with the same certainty.

Here is another point. It may need only an exceedingly delicate stroke to putt a ball properly, yet if you take the clumsiest, horniest-handed labouring man—say a road-mender or a railway navvy, who had never either seen or heard of golf before—he would never miss those three to five feet putts. Again it is because he does not know how really difficult they are. It is said that a mighty hunter of great renown, a man who had bagged all the big game of India in great variety, once declared in an agony, "I have encountered all the manifold perils of the jungle, I have tracked the huge elephant to his retreat, and I have stood eye to eye with the man-eating tiger." All of which was quite true—he had. Then he added, "And never once have I trembled until I came to a short putt."

I have thought the matter out, and I suggest the reason. It is one of the prettiest points in psychology that one will encounter in the whole of a long lifetime of the most careful thought and study. You don't really want any mind at all for putting purposes. The whole thing is too simple, and instead of a mind and brains being any use for the purpose in hand, they are a positive disadvantage, and are continually getting in the way.

III

Consciousness is often fatal in putting, and it is the conscience making a coward of the man that makes him miss his putt. To hole a three-foot putt over a flat piece of green is really one of the easiest things in the world; there can be no doubt about it. But while there is one ridiculously easy way of doing the putt, there are about a dozen more or less difficult ways of missing it, and these dozen are uppermost in the mind of the golfer when he comes to his effort. Thus the missing of the short putt represents the greatest triumph of matter over mind that is to be found in the whole range of sport, or, so far as I know, in any other pursuit in life. But why should a man be given to these morbid thoughts of the ways of missing, and why should he not be of hopeful, courageous disposition, and attack the hole boldly and with confidence, instead of remembering these dozen ways of missing? That is what non-golfers ask.

It is an easy question to set; but there is another factor in the situation that has to be mentioned. There is the sense of responsibility, and this sense of responsibility is probably greater in a man when he is making a putt of from three to five feet than it is in the case of any other man at any time in any other sport, because he will never, never have the chance again that he has got this time. If he putts and misses, the deed is irrevocable, the stroke and the hole or the half have been lost, and nothing that can happen afterwards can remove the loss. If a man makes a bad drive, or if his approach play is weak,

he can atone for these faults by being unusually clever with the subsequent stroke in the play to the hole, and he thinks he will. But the short putt is the very last stroke in that play, and if it is missed there is no possible atonement to be made. Thus there is something of the awful, of the eternal, of the infinite about the putt ; the man is awe-stricken ; he knows it is easy, but he is conscious of those dozen ways of missing. So he misses. I have put the question to a number of the best-known players of the day as to what were their precise thoughts—if any—when they came to making the final putt of a great match, which in many cases gave them a championship. Their answer almost universally was that their thought was, "What a fool I shall look if I miss this putt!" Thus they knew that they ought not to miss it, but they were burning with consciousness of the fact that they were terribly liable to do so. So matter triumphs over mind.

IV

Can anything in a mechanical sort of way be done to overcome this awful difficulty? I fear not, though one or two new putters are invented every week, and some of them are acclaimed as being the philosopher's stone for which we have been looking. The golf world began to buzz as if its mainspring had got loose when Mr. Travis won the championship at Sandwich with that Schenectady putter—the most epoch-making putter of all. But where is it now? Very few people use it.

Putters have been made of every conceivable shape and of every possible material. Counting all varia-

tions, there are thousands of kinds of putters. They have been made with the heads bent back, forwards, and sideways. Some of them have had very thin blades, and others have had thick slabs instead of blades. They have been fashioned like knives, hammers, spades, croquet mallets, spoons, and riddles, and some even like putters; and they have been made of iron, gun-metal, steel, aluminium, nickel, silver, brass, wood, bone, and glass. I have here beside me a putter made in nickel, and consisting of a large roller, running on ball bearings! It is no good. The simplest are the best. We cannot obtain will-power by machinery or mechanical appliances. Mr. James Robb tells me that the putter he always uses is an ordinary cleek which he got when a boy. His sister won it in a penny raffle, and having no use for it herself she gave it to him, and he has putted with it ever since. Three times has he putted his way to the final of the championship, and once has he won it. Again, Mr. J. E. Laidlay conveys the information to me that when he was a boy at Loretto School he came by the first golf clubs he ever had in his life in his second or third term, these being a cleek and a brassey. That cleek-head has been his putter ever since, and it is getting so light with wear that his friends are beginning to tell him that it will soon do for him to shave with. Harry Vardon won his first championship with a putter which was not a putter at all, but a little cleek that he had picked up only the day before in Ben Sayers' shop at North Berwick. He fancied it as a putter, and he has never putted better than on that day at Muirfield. He has never used it since, and now he has taken to the aluminium putter. And do you know that just before the

famous championship at Sandwich, Mr. Travis was using a putting cleek that he, too, had got at North Berwick, and it was his intention to putt with it in the tournament? But he was not putting very well in practice at St. Andrews, and one of his compatriots then introduced to him for the first time in his life the Schenectady, which, after one successful trial, was forthwith commissioned for Sandwich. What a subject for a great historical painting to be hung up in the Temple of Golf that we shall have some day—"Emmett introducing the Schenectady to Travis, 1904." I think it was Emmett; if it wasn't, then it was Byers. Anyhow, golf history was changed in consequence of that introduction, for I am sure that Mr. Travis would not have won at Sandwich with his North Berwick putting cleek. It wasn't the Schenectady that did it, but it was the player's then confidence in the Schenectady. He had, for the time being, got that little devil of golf in chains, and putting had become a great joy.

V

Golf is a jealous sport, and often takes it ill when any of its patrons devote their attention occasionally to other diversions of the open air, and exacts from them such a penalty in failures and aggravation when they come back to their true love as is calculated to make them hesitate before committing further offences. Perhaps it is natural in a way that golf, which has so much of wild nature about it, should be least inclined to brook the rivalry of games of the namby-pamby order. Fine field sports such

as shooting and fishing do not put you off your golf, in fact we have generally concluded that a few days' fishing sandwiched in a golfing holiday rather does good to your game. Perhaps it stimulates your thinking qualities, and if you are not reflecting upon the other and the better way in which you might have played the seventeenth hole the day before, when you should be noticing the significant manœuvres of something in the water, all is well. But a game that golf cannot and will not tolerate acquaintanceship with upon any consideration, is croquet. The royal and ancient one has decided apparently that it will not recognise it in any way whatever, and that it will give a bad time to any golfer who potters about on a lawn with hoops and bells and wooden sledgehammers. And it does so. There is no more sure way of disturbing your putting than an hour or two's croquet. This putting poison is most deadly efficacious, and its effects sometimes last for a couple of days. The man has not yet been born who can putt well after a game of croquet. Croquet is really putting, but putting with a big heavy ball after the style of a cannon ball, and it has to be putted on a woolly green of rough grass in which a golf ball would do something towards burying itself. Your accommodating eye and touch soon become accustomed to the big ball and the mallet, and you begin to putt through the hoops exceeding well, feeling then that you hold an advantage over others through usually having to manage a smaller ball under more difficult circumstances. But the awkward part of the business is that the eye and touch won't go back again so readily to their golfing adjustment, and while they are out of it some funny things are likely

to happen. At such times the golf ball looks impossibly small, and, while one is overcome with the idea that it will need remarkably delicate management, one finds it impossible to wield the putter as it should be. Here is the story of a recent happening:

A and B are keen rivals on the links—so keen that there is always great haggling when it comes to adjusting the odds for a match, B usually giving A three strokes. On the present occasion A informed B that he would be glad to play him a match on the afternoon of the following day. B wanted to know why they could not make a full day of it and play in the morning as well, but A pleaded that he had to take part in a tom-fool croquet match to which he was committed at the house where he was staying. They settled the terms of the next afternoon's encounter at the same time, and B said that as A would be playing croquet in the morning he would be willing to give him five strokes. This was really foolish of him; but no matter. A thought something, but said nothing. The golf match was duly played on the following day, and, to the mortification of B, the croquetter putted like an angel the whole way round, won his match by 6 and 5, won the bye, and, holing a ten-yarder to wind up with, took the bye-bye as well. B was naturally in a most unhappy state of mind, and moaned that he had never before known a man to be able to putt after playing croquet, and that it was because of this that he had given A two extra strokes on that dismal day. "Croquet! croquet!" exclaimed A, "but I *haven't* been playing croquet!" B stood aghast. "You *haven't*!" he shrieked; "then what the dickens were you doing this morning?" "Oh," said A, "I took the hint

from what you said yesterday, and cried off the croquet match. I spent an hour instead in practising putting on the carpet, and stuffed the fire-irons underneath to make undulations!" There are one or two very good morals in this pathetic little story.

If you need to putt perfectly you should do nothing with your hands, and as little as possible with the remaining parts of your physical construction for a whole day beforehand. The fact is that everything puts you off your putting, but some things more than others, which is another reason for that old saying that putting is the devil. An old golfer has said that the ideal preparation for really fine putting is to lie in bed for twenty-four hours with your wife to feed you with a spoon. A few hours' penmanship is certainly fatal to one's putting, and typewriting is worse. A man may depend upon it that if he goes in for a motor-car and drives it, he will henceforth be about three or four strokes worse on the greens than he used to be, which accounts for the anxiety of so many golfers to sell their new cars. And oh, that my best golfing enemy would buy a motor-cycle! A player once told me that he could not putt in the afternoon after having found it necessary to beat his dog at lunch-time; and it has been observed to be quite a bad thing for one's putting to use a walking-stick in one's ordinary pedestrianism. The putting muscles and nerves are the most delicate, subtle things in the whole of animal creation, and the pity is that circumstances generally preclude their more careful preservation during the periods in one's life when they are not needed for holing-out purposes.

VI

Now the society season is most alive. The golfing society—without a course of its own and consisting generally of men who have some other common interest, usually business or professional, apart from their love for the game—is becoming an increasingly popular institution in the south, and some people who have had to find fault with the constitution and general scheme of such bodies, have now to confess that their protests have been completely without avail, and that, for good or ill, these combinations have settled permanently with us. Considering the circumstances of the time and the great advance in the popularity of the game, they must be regarded as a natural evolution. After all, those people who regard the society as a kind of new-fangled notion and an undesirable development, need to have it pointed out to them that it is the oldest kind of golf community, and that nowhere does it flourish more than in the great Scottish centres of the game. For example, a great majority of the clubs of Edinburgh are not clubs at all, as the term is understood in the south, but merely golfing societies, made up often of men with another common interest, and the only difference between them and the southern societies is that they have a public course to play upon and are dependent upon the kind favour of nobody for the playing of the game; whereas in the south there are no public courses, and the societies have necessarily to crave the permission of clubs for the courtesy of their greens on the days when

they wish to go out to play their matches and competitions.

Perhaps some day there will be public courses in the south on which the societies may play. On the other hand, it has been suggested that the societies combined are even now almost strong enough to obtain and keep up a course of their own. In these days the societies' subscriptions are seldom more than five or ten shillings, but the majority of members would be agreeable to pay a guinea for the pleasures that they receive, and on such an increase it ought not to be a difficult matter to devise some scheme for the establishment of a society course. Alternatively, it is suggested that the societies might do something towards giving a substantial financial backing to some club or other that is in a bad way in this respect, on the condition that they had the use of that club's course on mid-week days for all genuine competitions and matches. Against this it has to be considered that one of the charms of society golf, as it is conducted in the south at the present time, is the opportunities that are given to members of visiting and playing over courses which are unfamiliar to them and which are not generally accessible, and of organising expeditions of members to these courses in the way of having a good day out together. All those who have experienced this pleasure know that it makes one of the most delightful variations from the ordinary routine of a golfer's life.

There is no reason to suppose that clubs generally, or any club in particular, are hostile to the society idea and practice, and we have not yet heard of any case in which a club has declined permission to a

society to play its match or competition on its course. So far from that being the case, the most important clubs of all, with the best courses, have shown a marked amiability in the matter. Still, from time to time there have been people who have suggested future difficulties, and even hinted at an abuse by societies in general of the good nature and courtesy of the clubs; and in view of the fact that in two years from now there will probably be ten societies for every two that are at present in existence, just as even now there are about five times the number that there was two years since, it will be as well if the clubs think the matter out and decide upon their policy, and, so far as they are able to do so, or regard it as politic, to announce it. When they do come to consider the matter, they will do well to do so on the broad basis of the common good, and to remember that an enormous factor in bringing about the increase in the popularity of golf, and in affording the great delights that golfers of the present day derive from the game, has been the principle of the community of interests which is generally agreed upon. When a man becomes a member of a "recognised golf club" in these days, he becomes *ipso facto* a kind of provisional member of all other golf clubs, that is to say, upon the payment of certain small fees and on a proper introduction—that of the secretary of his own club being commonly regarded as sufficient—he has some claim upon the courtesy of any other club whose green he may like to visit. The members of a club that extends these privileges to strangers obtain those of a like kind from other clubs, and thus to the individual player there is opened up the entire variety of all the golf in the

country. How much would our pleasure in the game be reduced if this variety were not available, and we were compelled to play exclusively upon the courses of clubs of which we were full members !

In this matter we have the principle of the community of golfers' interests in full play, and it seems that the proper recognition of the society and its right to the privileges that it seeks will be only another form of the same principle, and one scarcely less advanced than that which obtains at present. For already a fair proportion of the members of a club are members also of one or other societies, and the time is coming when it will be the exception for the club golfer not to be a member of a society. When this time arrives, it will evidently be necessary to apply this principle referred to, partly for the general good and enjoyment, and partly because any club that did not, and that withheld privileges to societies that were granted them by other clubs, would place all its own members who belonged to such societies in a very unpleasant position. Two rules seem to be called for. The first is, that in order that this principle shall always act fairly, and that no man shall get what he is not in a sense entitled to, it shall be enacted that each member of a society shall also be a member of a club in the district in which the society chiefly carries on its operations. The second is, that in all cases of society visits to clubs' courses, full green fees shall be paid, and that in no pecuniary sense shall the society be under any obligation to the club. The whole question is really one of very great importance, and those who are at the head of club and society affairs would do well to be giving to it their serious consideration, for nothing

would be more unfortunate than the creation of any misunderstanding which might lead to trouble in the future.

VII

The other day there was a little house-party of golfers for a week-end, and it was a most delightful gathering in all respects—fine weather, a rattling good seaside links, with putting greens that inspired the soul of the player to fine flights of genius, and a host of the very best golfing type, in whom is embodied all the best traditions and sportsmanship of the game. Sternly contested singles in the morning of the first day, with the yellow autumn sun shining and that pleasant nip in the air that braces the golfer to great efforts when he takes the wood out of his bag; a hard-fought foursome in the afternoon; and then as they dressed to go down for dinner on the evening of the first day, they reflected upon the magnificent opportunities of the golfing life and the poor state of those who were not such as they were then. Dinner, the glass of old port, piquant stories of the links and the recounting of brave deeds in fine matches, and then by and by the testing of various putting theories on the carpet—O! the happy, happy golfer.

Forty years upon the links had one by one only served to increase the host's enthusiasm for the game of games. In all things he was the golfer first and the ordinary individual afterwards. Like all experienced players, he was inclined to be dogmatic and, as some would say, old-fashioned. But when you say that a golfer is old-fashioned you are paying

him a very high compliment; you are placing his portrait in an exclusive gallery of the old masters of the game who built it up and endowed it with traditions such as are the envy of all others. The old-fashioned golfer nearly always belongs to the best type of the fine old English or Scottish gentleman. But this host had still original ideas of his own, and sometimes within the walls of his own house he will tell of them, or let them slip by accident, which he might very much fear to do when in the company of his colleagues of the Royal and Ancient on the occasion of his bi-annual pilgrimages to St. Andrews. So on the second morning, when the party was at breakfast and eager to arrange the matches of the day, its curiosity was somewhat stirred by the remark that he made to madame as she was lading the blue cups with tea, that last night he "went round in 78." The lady of the house nodded and smiled, asked sympathetically if he had had any luck at the short holes, and was assured that he had taken 3 to one and 4 to the other, but had got his 78 by the aid of a grand—yes, by gad, a really corking 3 at the last hole! On the whole, it was gathered he was driving well, but his iron play was not all that it might have been—putting splendid. Now nothing had been heard before of any such fine performance as this, as surely there would have been if, as it appeared, it was of such recent date. The company was stirred with a desire for knowledge as to the when and the how, so that they might not be laggard in their compliments upon the making of such an evidently pretty piece of golf. A 3 at the eighteenth, too! If that was the same eighteenth the flag upon whose

putting green we could just see from the window now, it was a 3 to be spoken of with admiration and profound respect. And so one at the table murmured that they had a desire for knowledge upon this 78, which so evidently interested the chief, but he pooh-poohed the curiosity, and said that the recounting of that particular round would do better for a wet day than for a morning when all were so keen to be playing the real golf. The "real" golf; so there was a qualification imparted to that round of 78, and now they would not be denied. Come! come! And so they had the secret out.

It appeared that though he looked so well and hale, the chief was not one of those happy beings who after their days upon the links go to rest at night and drop clean away into a dreamless sleep. There is usually a preliminary period of insomnia, which is an unpleasant relic of some hard times that he had abroad in the middle years of his life. It is an effort with him to "drop off," and many and various have been the devices that in his time he has employed for wooing Morpheus to his nightly service. For a long time he played the old game of shepherdry. When the candle was extinguished and his head was laid upon the pillow, he set up before him an imaginary hedge, a big thick hedge which divided one large field from another, and in this hedge there was just one small gap through which one sheep could pass at a time, or two by squeezing when in a hurry. Why the sheep should be driven from one field into the other no man can say; but on countless nights by many poor sufferers from too much wakefulness, millions upon millions of sheep have been driven through this same

gap in the hedge. Through it they are hurried in their ones and twos in a seemingly never-ending line. There is no limit to this flock, and it is of the essence of the trick that is being played against the enemy, insomnia, that the shepherd shall attend most strictly to his duties, and never for a single moment shall let his thoughts wander to other and more real affairs. And so at last the active brain gives way, and as the tail-end of one big sheep is seen disappearing through the gap a thick haze comes down upon the fields, and the shepherd and his sheep are lost until the morning.

The chief was shepherd for some years, and it was only by the odd accident of dwelling fondly for a few minutes, as he laid himself down in bed, upon the fine things he had done in one great match that day that he came by a change of nightly occupation. With the links laid out before him on the inner side of his eyelids, he played every shot again, and if the truth must be told, he played some of them twice, and in this way he proved to his own immense satisfaction that, soul-satisfying as had been his play that day, his round was morally at least three strokes better than it had worked out. He played his round from the first tee to the eighteenth green on the eyelid links once, and so pleasant was the play that, like the gourmand golfer, he must needs play it again, shot by shot; and a third time he set out with his clubs. But this time he was tiring. The two mental rounds that had gone before had told their tale, and he was constantly finding his wayward ball in the rough, and making sometimes fine recoveries with his iron clubs, and sometimes taking two to get clear again. You see

he always played the game. Perfection in golf is not given to any man, and even in the eyelid game one must pull and slice at times, must now and again socket with the irons, and take one's eye off the little white ball. And so it happened that at last the tired brain surrendered, and upon the fifteenth green, with the match still unfinished—one up and three to go—he fell asleep.

Thenceforth the shepherdry was given up, and he took on the eyelid golf instead. Two rounds he played every night, and every time he played the game, refusing to allow himself things he had not clearly seen himself do, and not taking unto himself the power of doing miracles or of always playing the perfect golf. In that there would have been great monotony, just as there would be if we always played perfect golf in our real life upon the links. He never made a carry in this nightly imagination that he had not made in daylight, never laid an iron shot dead, or holed a putt the like of which he had not done with real club and ball. Some nights he would be off his game, and his score would run far up into the nineties, and he would be badly beaten. On those nights he might go to sleep a little sooner than usual. On others he would be playing the best game of his youth. In general he found the occupation much more pleasant and agreeable to his tastes than the shepherdry, and it is a curious thing, which one must believe since he said so, that these night rounds, with all their thoughts and their minor anxieties, actually did something towards the improvement of the real game that was played in the daytime. The player now and then obtained new and good

ideas, and he was taught to be a little more thoughtful than perhaps he had been in the past. By and by the secret of this play became too much for him to keep, so he unfolded the story of his eyelid games to the lady partner of his life, who, since the real service that they did to him was evident to her sympathetic mind, treated it with becoming seriousness. This was the explanation of the 78 that was spoken of at breakfast-time that morning, and in it there is a hint that might sometime prove of service to those who, like the host of that week-end, are sometimes troubled for want of that ability to loose their thoughts to sleep.

VIII

One does not see St. Andrews at its best at a time of a championship, or at any other time when there are great crowds in the streets and on the courses, and swarming round about the clubhouse and outside the shops of the clubmakers overlooking the eighteenth green. It is not its natural self then; it is at its worst. I do not like it when the trippers pour in from Glasgow. One cannot resist the suspicion that many of them are not as good golfers as they ought to be, and that they love St. Andrews for what they save by her, being the only course in the world on which a man may play for nothing, with a kindly Corporation and a great club spending large sums of money upon it. To keep those marvellous greens in their fine state they employ a genius among greenkeepers, who is Hugh Hamilton, who is the successor of Tom Morris, who was the

successor of Allan Robertson. It may seem strange to some that the play should be made without any charge, but St. Andrews would not be the same, and would lose rather than gain in dignity, if it were not free. The time to see it at its best is in the spring, and it is fine again in the late autumn, when the mere holiday-makers have gone back to their cities and workshops.

The only time when a crowd is bearable at St. Andrews is on the autumn medal day, and then, indeed, it is as if the tradition and the sanctity of the place are intensified. This surely is the great Celebration Day of golf. With its dignity, ceremony, tradition, crowds, and excitement, it is really very much like a Lord Mayor's Day. Old folks who may have never played, wee bairns who are only just beginning to think they will play when they can walk a little better, are all straining to excitement because it is the club's medal day, the day of the Royal Medal, and of the captain's playing himself in, and of the firing of the guns. From north, south, east, and west—many of them from London—the members of the Royal and Ancient Club foregather for the occasion. There is a hushed solemnity overhanging the place. Something is about to be done that used to be done in the days of the grandfathers and the great-grandfathers, and the men on the links on this occasion feel themselves to be the descendants—as often enough they are in blood—of the great golfers of old who made the early chapters of the history of the game.

The playing-in to the captaincy is a great ceremony, for this captaincy of the Royal and Ancient Club is

the highest honour to be achieved in the game. No man who is not of the highest character and of the greatest golfing integrity is ever chosen for this high office. To be captain of the club is quite comparable to being Lord Mayor of London. Amateur champions have been captains, but no man may be captain because he has been amateur champion. It is an understanding that the captain shall win the Silver Club, given by the club a century and a half ago, and the Gold Medal, which was presented by Queen Adelaide in 1838, when she expressed the wish that the captain would wear it on all public occasions, as he does at the club meetings; and to make sure of the coincidence of the captaincy and the winning of these trophies it is ordained by custom that the captain-elect shall have no opponents in the round that he is supposed to play; and, furthermore, to make his path to victory as smooth and easy as possible, he is merely called upon to tee up his ball on the first tee in front of the clubhouse, to drive it off, and then he is supposed to have played his round and to have gained his victory.

Thus this simple historic ceremony of teeing up and driving off for the Silver Club and the Royal Adelaide Medal is a great function. Crowds gather to witness it, and a line of men and boys is stretched out along the course from the tee, often giving to the hero of the moment an all too narrow margin for error in his stroke. It is ordained that this ceremony shall be performed at the exact stroke of ten o'clock in the morning, and when the hand of the clock on the clubhouse points to that hour a military person fires a small cannon on the fore-

shore and—crack!—the captain-elect drives his ball, and he thus advances to the topmost height of honour. The boys rush for the ball, which, being gained by one of them, becomes an heirloom in his family. And then the real competition begins at once, and the new captain may take part in it if he wishes. The prize now is the Gold Medal with the green riband, which was given by King William IV. in 1837. The King himself decreed that it should be challenged and played for annually, and, writing from St. James's Palace, he expressed "his satisfaction in availing himself of this opportunity to evince his approbation of that ancient institution." Two by two the great golfers of the time go out to play for it, and excitement is keen as the day wears on. The last couple having holed out on the eighteenth green, the cannon is fired again to indicate that for one more year the Royal Medal has been won and lost, and all is over so far as the outdoor proceedings of the meeting are concerned.

In the evening is the feast, when the new captain achieves the full measure of his dignity. Hoary traditions surround his presidency at all meetings. In days of old, in the century before last, captains were fined pints and magnums of claret for certain delinquencies. At this feast the captain and ex-captains sit at the high table, in red coats, with all the ancient insignia of the club laid out on the table before them. Silver clubs are set there, to one of which each of all the long line of captains has fastened a silver ball, with his name and the date of his captaincy engraved upon it. The winner of the King William IV. Medal is toasted, and he is called up from his place that the captain with solemn

ceremony may invest him with the medal, hanging it round his neck. Then, upon occasion, new members of this ancient club have been called up before the captain, who, holding one of the silver clubs before them, calls upon them to kiss it and to swear honour and obedience to the laws and customs of the club and the game. And then great golfers of the old school may sing old ballads, and an evening of happiness goes on, and if there are no trains to be caught in the morning, matches are made to-night. This is St. Andrews.

IX

The sowing of seed upon a course may seem a dull business, and the average golfer leaves the consideration of all such matters to those whose duty it is to attend to them, and contents himself with his play on the resulting turf; but in this indifference he misses much that is interesting, and occasionally some most pleasant humours, as witness the true story of what happened on a suburban links. A very thorough club manager had bought many bags of two different kinds of seed, which were to be used by an intelligent workman for the benefit of the course, according to a scheme already devised and discussed. One kind of seed was that which would produce long, thick grass of a very coarse character, and which would grow with big and almost indestructible roots under the very worst of circumstances. It was intended that this should be sown under the many trees that abounded on the course. It was not only to be

grass that would thrive under the most disadvantageous circumstances, but it was meant also to be "rough," which might some day do something to stimulate the power of language among those golfers who just now might play from underneath the branches of those trees with their putters. The other seed was that which would make grass of the very finest texture. It needed a delicate, well-groomed soil for its sustenance, and its prime object was to produce putting greens that would give great joy to golfers on their game.

So the contents of some bags were to be scattered underneath the trees, and the contents of the others were to be spread over the putting greens, and the manager rested and refreshed himself with tea while this, as he thought, was being done, and he talked pleasantly to me of the various excellences of the course and the way in which difficulties of soil and situation had been conquered. And then there broke in upon us an emissary from the man who had been sowing the seed, who came to say, "Please, sir, there's been a sort of accident happened, and it's like as William has been and mistaken and gone and planted the putting green seed under them trees, and he's planted the seed as'll make the long grass on some of the putting greens. And we want to know, sir, what we must do!" What, indeed?

X

When October comes we bid her a very loyal and joyful welcome, for we have come to regard her as the queen of months for golf. No soul so serene as that

of the golfer as he tees the ball on a bright October morning. It sometimes seems to us of the links that we are glad of every change in the seasons. When it is spring, we look forward to the coming of summer, and then we sigh for the autumn, and in turn are glad even to sink back to the adventures and trials of the heroic golf that we are called upon to play in the winter-time. And yet it is seldom through discontent that we thus anticipate the changing of the seasons, but rather that we, as golfers, do so highly appreciate the glorious variety which is afforded to us by the system of Nature. Constantly happy in our game, while we are playing it, the season is for the moment forgotten, and it is only in the intervals of holes or rounds that we are roused to the eternal transformation that is proceeding.

“ With thee conversing I forget all time ;
All seasons and their change, all please alike.”

But there is nothing sweeter than the bright October morning on the links. A fragrant smell of moist earth rises up, and it is as if that very scent is a rare stimulant to the golfer after the heat of summer. There is a fine spring in the turf as we tread upon it, and, quite revelling in it, we find that we must needs go tripping light-heartedly along the links until the problems of the play at a couple of holes have sobered us down. We like even to see the dewdrops lingering on until starting time, taking advantage of the laggard autumnal sun. The film of mist that is hanging a few holes out, and the suspicion of a nip in the air, are fine. And then there are the glorious tints of autumn, the yellows and the crimsons and the browns, blended as only one Artist knows how to

blend them, and, amidst the happiness of it all, the pathos of the scene comes in upon us as we listen to the faint crackle of falling leaves. The heart of every golfer is touched by all these changes, for whatever may have been his previous disposition and his tastes in life, each one becomes in time something of a Nature lover, and acquires a knowledge and interest in some of the simpler features of her work. For, of all games, golf is the game which is most closely allied with simple Nature. A little ball, a stick, a small hole, and the open country at her wildest and roughest, and there you have your golf. Then what is deeper than the soul's content of the golfer when he finishes the afternoon round just as the red sun is dipping away to other lands, and by the time he and his clubs are cleaned, the twilight is already changing into the evening gloom, and the thing that it seems best to do is that which is one of the happiest in the golfer's day, which is to sit by a bright fire and talk with one's enemy of the links of all the good and the bad golf that has been played since the morning. Come night, we have had our day, and this talk by the fire, while the white mists gather again upon the links outside, is yet more cheering to the heart of the golfer than all the evenings of summer.

THE PROFESSOR ON THE LINKS

I

“THE problem of the golf ball’s flight is one of very serious difficulty.” That is what was said to a gathering of savants by Professor Peter Guthrie Tait, one of the most brilliant scientists of the latter part of the last century, and the only man who has probed deeply into the real science of the game of golf. He was a wonderful man in many respects. He applied his marvellous scientific knowledge and powers of investigation to everything that came his way. One day he would be extracting cube roots from the most unsuspected quarters, and another he would be analysing the character and formation of the ripples on the surface of a viscous liquid. A few flourishes of the knife of science, a sharp explosion with one of his specially prepared *formulæ*—consisting of the most wonderful combinations of the ν ’s, the γ ’s, the τ ’s, and the ϕ ’s—and the common but stubborn thing of everyday life was made to yield up its innermost secrets, so that thenceforward it was regarded in a quite different way from that which it had been in the past.

Nothing was sacred from the application of the Professor’s science, and golf was not; but to the credit of the game be it said that some of its scientific

problems baffled this great man of science as nothing else that he had ever tackled before so seriously had done. He spent weeks, months, and even years, in occasional periods, upon it; he employed the most intelligent men of science with marvellous powers of reckoning as his assistants, he bombarded the game with the most terrible *formulæ* that even he had ever invented; but golf still held the upper hand and retained some of its secrets, while it often smiled derisively at the Professor when it had sent him a long way along a false path. The Professor would not give up. He returned always to the attack, and golf and he came to closer grips. He did, indeed, obtain many wonderful secrets from its possession, and he found out more about it—all of it very wonderful and very interesting—than any man had ever done before, or possibly ever will do again. Now and again he told his learned brethren of the difficult nature of the task that he had entered on. Before he died he had found out most things, but golf still held some secrets from him.

Many of the things that he knew, and the way in which he found them out, were never published to the golfing world. He issued one or two papers of a quite popular character, and very elementary; but they did not contain a tithe of what he had discovered or say how he had discovered it. Here we will try to tell the golfer a little of what the Professor found out about the things that happen when the ball is driven from the tee. They will interest him, and perhaps cause him some surprise. Only those conclusions will be given which he proved beyond question, and the truth of them must generally be taken for granted, as it may be safely, since the

professor's lines of study would take a volume to expound with any lucidity, and even then a considerable scientific knowledge on the part of the reader would first of all be necessary.

II

It should be said that, while the Professor played a little golf himself, and was much in love with St. Andrews as a resort, what led him in the first place to make his investigations was watching the play of his famous golfing son, Fred Tait. A few idle, fanciful conjectures on the flight of the ball that was sent skimming through the air from Freddie's driver led to a more serious calculation, and then, like a siren, the great mystery of golf drew him on. But early in his investigations he committed himself to the statement that nobody could drive a golf ball that would have a carry of more than 180 or 190 yards without exerting at least three times the strength that is generally exerted by a strong man when driving; that is to say, that a carry of such distance was practically impossible. But this statement was no sooner before the public than young Fred proved the fallacy of it, by celebrating his twenty-third birthday by driving a record ball which had considerably more carry than that.

"Stuff! Humbug!" said the Professor; but the fact was there, and when the golf world came to know about it, they asked the Professor what was the use of all his calculating—and to this day that error is chiefly what is remembered by the general public about his investigations. This incident may have

been largely responsible for the fact that thereafter he only once or twice let the golfers into the secrets of what he was doing and had found out, reserving the story of his investigations for learned bodies who were most closely concerned about them.

The mistake that he made, which was exposed to him by his son, set him out on a new line of thought, and showed him vaguely where his error was, though not the nature of it. And the discovery which he made at the outset was a startling one, and it may cause some astonishment to the player of to-day who will reflect upon it for a moment. The steadiest, most constant, and most persistent force with which we are generally acquainted is the force of gravity. It is always there; it acts unceasingly upon everything. To defeat gravity, therefore, is almost for a while to suspend the working of Nature. Suddenly it burst upon the mind of the Professor that the golf ball was made as it were to defeat gravity, and so in a sense it does. He found this out by observing the time of flight of the ball, and discovering that it was nearly twice as long as it ought to be, if gravity had free and unfettered play. This is to say, that if gravity were allowed to act in the usual way on the ball from start to finish, as it acts on other things, it was quite inevitable by all the laws of nature and science that a drive of 200 yards would be completed in three and a half seconds. If a man threw a ball so as to describe as nearly as possible the same trajectory as a golf ball, and to stop at the same spot, it would only take three and a half seconds. But the golf ball takes six and a half seconds! Somehow or other it was clear that gravity was being beaten all the way. If it were not so, it would be impossible

for the golf ball to remain in the air so long while it was accomplishing such a short flight. That was the great mystery that the professor had to solve, and he solved it at last. It may be said here, in passing, and will be more fully explained another time, that he found out that it was due to the rotation given to the ball by the club, and the nature of the stroke when it was struck from the tee, a rotation which in many ways was responsible for some most extraordinary happenings; all of which the golfer will be a much wiser man for having knowledge of. But before he could go thoroughly into the mystery of this rotation he had to make many other preliminary investigations, and some of the results of these may be quoted.

One of the Professor's first efforts was in the direction of finding out the speed with which the ball left the club; and it was a long time—years, in fact—before he came to any definite understanding on the point; so difficult did he find the investigation, despite all the experiments he made, the *formulae* that he applied to them, and the scientific instruments that he brought to bear on the problem. He had a very capable observer, Mr. T. Hodge, making examinations of the flight of balls driven in actual play at St. Andrews, by the help of the instrument known as the Bashforth Chronograph, with which the speed of bullets is measured; and, what with the results arrived at in this way and others, he came to the conclusion that the initial speed of the ball was over 500 feet a second, which speed, of course, was lost very quickly as the resistance of the air was encountered.

With this as his starting-point, he made many

deductions ; but subsequently he found that he was wrong in the original assumption.

A vast number of calculations and experiments followed. In a cellar he constructed a complicated pendulum arrangement, to the bob of which there was attached a large screen with a thick clay surface, and against this he got several well-known golfers to drive their hardest, and made the most minute calculations as to the effect upon the pendulum. The clay was scattered in all directions, damage was done, and the golfers complained that under such circumstances they were not able to drive their best. The pendulum and the strangeness of the whole arrangement "put them off." Some time afterwards he constructed an improved pendulum, the clay screen being fixed on to lengths of clock spring, and when this was placed in a doorway the golfers were again set to drive at it.

What with one thing and another the Professor at last came to the final and definite conclusion, that the ball started from the club at a speed, in the case of a good drive, of about 240 feet a second, but that in the case of exceptional balls it sometimes was as much as 300 or even 350 feet per second. This, of course, was with the gutta ball ; and the resiliency and initial speed of the rubber-cored ball being certainly much greater, it is fair to believe that the average initial speed of a well-driven ball in these days is quite 300 feet a second ; or, to put it in another way, over two hundred miles an hour. Great as this speed appears, it might be mentioned incidentally that the muzzle velocity of a bullet from a Maxim gun is generally about 2000 feet a second, or about seven times as fast.

III

While he was at work on these reckonings he dispelled one fallacy, which, notwithstanding, is commonly held by golfers to the present day. Most players think that when driving and following through well the ball hangs on the face of the club, as it were, for long enough for the club to do something in the way of guiding it. How brief is the time in which the actual stroke is made for good or ill was proved conclusively in a very striking manner, and that time was set down—the whole time of impact—as that in which the club, moving at 300 feet a second, passed through about four times the linear space by which the side of the ball was flattened. Putting this space down, nowadays, at about $\frac{1}{8}$ in., and reckoning the time that it would take the club going at the speed indicated to cover that small distance, we have the fact that the duration of impact is only about $\frac{1}{7000}$ th of a second, and that that is the whole time that the golfer has for the guiding of the ball! As the Professor said, “the ball has, in fact, left the club behind before it has been moved through more than a fraction of its diameter”; and in the case of the gutta, with the smaller extent to which it flattened on the club, he came to the conclusion that the duration of impact was far less than that which has just been mentioned.

Incidentally in this connection he took occasion to expose another of the golfer's fallacies as to the effect of wind on the flight of the ball, in the following words: “It is well to call attention to a singularly

erroneous notion very prevalent among golfers, namely, that a following wind carries a ball onwards ! Such an idea is, of course, altogether absurd, except in the extremely improbable case of wind moving faster than the initial speed of the ball. The true way of regarding matters of this kind is to remember that there is always resistance while there is relative motion of the ball and the air, and that it is less as that relative motion is smaller, so that it is reduced throughout the path (of flight) when there is a following wind. Another erroneous idea somewhat akin to this is that a ball rises considerably higher when driven against the wind, and lower if with the wind, than it would if there were no wind. The difference (whether it is in excess or deficit will depend on the circumstances of projection, notably on the spin) is in general very small ; the often large apparent rise or fall being due mainly to perspective as the vertex of the path is brought considerably nearer to or farther from the player."

And Professor Tait was led to make a definite pronouncement on the particular kind of weather in which a ball will fly best and farthest. What golfers do not generally realise is that the atmospheric resistance to the flight of their ball is much greater than in simple proportion to its speed ; it is as the square of the speed. This is to say, that if one ball is driven twice as fast as another to begin with, the resistance to that ball is four times as great as it is to the slower one. It is this fact which makes it so difficult to get extra length, beyond a good length, on to a ball, no matter what improvements are made in the ball. Therefore, on the weather question the Professor set it down that, "Of

course, other circumstances being the same, the only direct effect is on the co-efficient of resistance. If this be taken as proportional (roughly) to the density of the air, it may vary, in this climate, to somewhere about 10 per cent. of its greatest value, and the drive is accordingly shortest on a dry, cold winter day with an exceptionally high barometer. The longest drive will, of course, be when the air is as warm and moist as possible, and the barometer very low."

But he probed most deeply into the mysteries of the flight of the golf ball when he came suddenly to understand the rotation which was subjected to it by the club, and it is of interest and importance to every golfer that he should understand it also. The starting-point of the wonderful investigations that he made is contained first in the simple fact that when an object is poised in the air there is equal atmospheric pressure upon it at all points; and second, that, as several of the most eminent scientists before him, from Newton onwards, had found out, when a sphere rotates in a current of air the side of the sphere which is advancing to meet the current is subject to greater pressure than is that which is moving in the direction of the current; and a step further in this argument is that, as the result of this extra pressure, if a spherical ball be rotating, and at the same time advancing in still air, it will deviate from a straight path in the same direction as that in which its front side is being carried by the rotation.

Therefore, when a ball is sliced, it is made to spin round so that its front side moves round constantly to the right, and, in accordance with the law just mentioned, there is a greater atmospheric pressure on the

left side than on the right, and, consequently, the ball is pushed away to the right—as we see it. When it is pulled, the spin is in the opposite direction, and the extra pressure is from the right, and so it is sent away to the left. When the ball is topped the spin on the front side is downwards, and the ball ducks—the extra pressure this time being in the same direction as gravity; and when under-cut is applied, and under-spin follows, the front side of the ball is spinning upwards, and the extra pressure is from below and against gravity.

When this conclusion was first briefly stated, golfers resisted the suggestion that when driving they imparted any under-spin to the ball; but the Professor stuck to his point, and proved it beyond doubt, and it is in this way that the ball takes six and a half seconds over its flight instead of the three and a half that it would otherwise do; and he proved, moreover, that if there was no under-spin imparted to it when driving it would only travel about half the distance that it usually does. The greater the under-spin the greater the upward pressure, and this conclusion leads to others very interesting.

IV

Golfers are in the way of saying that this ball “flies well” or that the other ball “does not fly well.” Sometimes it is imagination born of lack of form; but when great players concur it is not imagination. Some balls are obviously better than others—made of better material, better elastic thread, and more carefully constructed. There is an evident reason

why such balls should fly better than others ; that is to say, why they should go off the club more quickly, keep their place in the air longer, and travel farther. But then there are many balls of absolutely first-rate quality—and maximum price—that vary considerably in their flying properties, and it very commonly happens that even balls out of the same box, made at the same time and in the same way and of the same stuff, vary also. One frequently finds one or two “bad” balls in a box, and one or two very good ones. The excellent player very soon knows when he has come by the good ones and the bad ones. Now why, under such circumstances, should these balls vary so? What is it that makes them vary? Golfers in general do not know. Often enough they put it down to “pure cussedness”; others, to an idea that it is due to some accidental flaw in the manufacture. It is neither the one nor the other.

The scientific explanation is really a very simple one, and it was set forth very lucidly by Professor Tait. The perfect ball—using the adjective in its most absolute sense—is that which has its centre of gravity, that is to say its centre of weight, dead in the centre of the ball, the centre of measurement. It is by no means to be assumed that these two centres must necessarily coincide. For them to do so exactly is an ideal state, and while matter and man are what they are, and subject to their constant, even though slight, deviations, it is unattainable. But when a ball is properly cored and properly covered, most carefully and by the most exact machinery, the two centres come very near together, and generally, to all intents and purposes, do coincide. That they do not

always do so exactly is merely because the greatest human effort is incapable of achieving the scientific ideal, and it must constantly happen that, despite all that effort, the distances between the two centres vary a little. Practically no effort can prevent it, particularly when the exigencies of circumstances demand that balls should be turned out weekly in tens of thousands, and at a price of not more than two shillings each. Now and again the separation of the centres will be greater than normal—accidental again—and then you get a really bad ball, with much bias upon it. When the centre of weight is not at centre of measurement, it means that the ball in effect is heavier on one side than the other, biased, and that is practically equal to its being not round. Suppose you inserted a small piece of lead just inside the cover of a ball and closed it up again, shaping it as perfectly as it was before. The effect of this would be to remove the centre of weight very far towards that side, and you would have a great exaggeration of the difference between the two centres that commonly exists. If you laid that ball on a table it would promptly roll round until the weighted or biased side were underneath. If you floated it in water it would wobble about until eventually it did the same thing; and if you floated it in air it would wobble again, and such wobbling would obviously be detrimental to its straight and even flight. There you have it. The farther the two centres are from each other—from the ideal state of absolute coincidence—the greater must be the tendency towards a wobbly or uneven flight, and diminished rotation, and consequently towards a short flight. In the case of many balls other than golf balls,

these variations are very considerable. You have an extreme example when a football is out of shape, and it can be seen to make zigzags in the air. But the flight of footballs, or even cricket balls, is not such a delicate and susceptible thing as the flight of a golf ball at its far greater pace.

Professor Tait pointed out two very simple ways of finding out whether a golf ball had its two centres approximately coincident, and whether in consequence it ought to and would fly well. The first was by floating it in a bath of brine or mercury and noticing whether it wobbled or turned over. Many golfers are acquainted with this test, and employ it in a cruder and less decisive form by floating the ball in water. While a ball that had a fairly considerable separation between its two centres might not show any wobbling movement when floated in water, and consequently might not completely establish its claim to be properly centered and of good flying capacity so far as this part of its properties was concerned, the presumption would be greatly in its favour. On the other hand, that which did show any perceptible wobble in water would be self-condemned at once, and would undoubtedly be a bad flyer and a danger to the game of the good golfer.

The second test is one of comparison, and is exceedingly simple. You cannot compare the flying capacities of two or more balls by driving them with golf clubs, for however near to exact similarity you may think the strokes to have been, there is certain to have been an appreciable scientific and mathematical difference, such as would make a proper comparison impossible. But you may give practically exactly the same initial impetus in exactly the same circum-

stances to two or more balls by shooting them in the same direction from a crossbow, when the string is always pulled out to exactly the same point. Here you will have the balls flying under the simplest possible conditions, with no spin to complicate the flight and interfere with the comparison, and anyone who takes the trouble to make this experiment will find that some balls will regularly fly farther than others when shot forward in this manner. If the size and the weights are the same, these balls are better centered and better flyers, and it is an easy matter for any player to establish a standard by this test, and to judge of the perfection of any particular ball at a moment's notice. Of course such a test takes no account of the resiliency of the ball; but then, as every player knows, there is a clear difference between good resiliency and good flying properties. In the old days of the gutta, when so much depended upon the even quality of the material all through the ball—and these were, of course, the days when Professor Tait made his investigations and experiments, and drew his conclusions—the variations between centres were greater than they are now, though not so great as in the early period of the rubber-core, when the winding and covering machinery were imperfect. Rubber-cored balls have lately begun to be covered by winding very thin strips of the covering material round the core in just the same way that the core itself is wound, and this should greatly conduce towards more accurate centering. An understanding of the foregoing will help the player towards an appreciation of some of the chief points of a good ball, and he will see how extreme is the necessity for perfect winding machinery and for

the most careful supervision of the process. Nobody calls for a hand-made ball in these days: he wouldn't get it if he did; and it wouldn't be any good if he got it, for the chances would be enormously against its being so well centered as one made by machinery.

V

Now, however good the ball might be, the chances would be against a perfect stillness upon any axis during flight; that is, of course, when no initial spin was imparted to it by the way in which the stroke was played. It would very likely turn just a little upon an axis, and that little would unsteady and injure its flight, inasmuch as the wobble would be from side to side alternately. This difficulty can be got over by imparting an initial spin to the ball which will always be the same all through its flight, and which will thus stop the wobbling. In a word, rotation will steady the flight. This idea was originally at the bottom of the rifling of the barrel through which a bullet is projected; certainly it was the fundamental principle of the rifling of the old 32-pounders. Better to make the ball rotate on an axis that you know about than that it should wobble on one you do not know about, they said; and so the tubes were rifled inside, the balls were made to rotate, and their flight was made steadier and therefore longer.

In the very earliest days of his investigations upon the flight of the golf ball, Professor Tait thought of the application of this idea to the game. A rotation should be given to the ball to steady its flight and

make it longer. A moment's thought on the part of those whose rudimentary scientific knowledge is a little rusty, will indicate that there are three definite and clearly distinguished axes of rotation. One is a vertical one, and it is chiefly upon that axis that the golf ball rotates when it is pulled or sliced, or upon an axis that has something of the vertical element in it. Then there is the horizontal axis, which is at right angles to the line of flight ; and this is the axis upon which it rotates when either under-spin or top has been applied to it. And, thirdly, there is the horizontal axis, which is parallel with the line of flight. This is the axis upon which the rifle bullet spins. At first Professor Tait was inclined to the idea that the last-named would be the ideal axis for the rotation of the golf ball, but it happens to be the one upon which it is impossible to make it rotate when struck by a golf club. However, in this detail of his preliminary theorising he was wrong, due entirely to his not having then investigated the virtues of under-spin as always given to a ball when well driven, and not having come by the great discovery that this under-spin helped the ball to resist gravity and prolong its flight as nothing else could. How exactly under-spin does this, we have just seen, and readers will now have a very definite perception of the qualities of a ball and the importance of rotation, and though the chief advantage of rotation is in resisting gravity, it is an incidental advantage of it, as will now be understood, that the flight of the ball is thereby steadied, and a very slight inaccuracy in centering made of less consequence than it would otherwise be. But remember that a considerable inaccuracy in centering will interfere with the rotation,

and therefore the bad flying ball can still be distinguished, because it will fly badly.

VI

Now, in continuation of this brief and simple exposition of some of the points of the Professor's theorising—backed up by constant practical experiment—upon the merits of under-spin in prolonging and lengthening the flight of the ball which created excited comment in the world of golf at the time, much smaller as that world was then than it is now. it may be mentioned that it was his fair conclusion that good driving lay not in powerful hitting, but in the proper apportionment of good hitting with such a knack as would give the right amount of proper spin to the ball. Thus, while a player who gave no spin to his ball might attain a carry of 136 yards, another one who hit his ball with just the same force, giving it the same initial speed, but also a moderate amount of under-spin, would get a carry of 180 yards. Of course there would be a great difference between the trajectories of the two flights. By an experiment on a small scale he showed very conclusively what under-spin did. By shooting a ball from a very weak bow, but with the string just below the middle of the ball, so as to impart a slight spin, he made the ball fly point blank to a mark thirty yards off. When he drew the string to the same distance, but applied it to the middle of the ball, it fell eight feet short. It had no under-spin the second time.

Another point is extremely interesting. Some

golfers no doubt think that in driving they have to cock their balls up in the air, so to speak; that is to say, that they have to aim at an upward trajectory from the beginning. As a matter of fact they have to do nothing of the kind, and as a matter of common knowledge the best balls, as driven by a Vardon or a Braid or any other first-class player, always "start low" and keep a path quite close to the ground for some distance, after which they begin to rise. If there were no under-spin the ball could not keep this horizontal path for the time that it does; still less could it begin to rise afterwards. It is the under-spin that does it, and the theoretically perfect drive is the one that is hit straight forward with practically no initial elevation or incline. The character of the stroke gives to the ball the necessary under-spin and power to rise, and the way in which the club comes on to the ball in a stroke so perfectly executed makes any considerable initial elevation impossible, just as it is not wanted. But mark, that if the golfer has not acquired the proper knack of driving—*i.e.* the proper knack of imparting just the right kind and right amount of underspin—then he will need some initial elevation in order to keep his ball in the air; and so he has to depart intentionally from the proper principles of driving, and deliberately cock up his ball, even though slightly. How his driving suffers in consequence may be gathered by taking the extreme case of no under-spin at all, upon which Professor Tait says: "When there is no rotation there must be initial elevation, and even if we make it as great as one in four, the requisite speed of projection for a carry of 250 yards would be 1120 feet per second, or about that of sound." Now,

as the actual speed of projection in the case of a fine drive by a first-class player is not more than 350 feet per second, the reader may have some idea as to how hard he would have to hit if he were dispensing with rotation. Of course "a carry of 250 yards" is extremely long, and is rarely if ever done in the absence of a helping wind from behind, but the Professor had just been speaking of the practicability of such a carry "in still air." Even though it be abnormal, the vast disparity between an initial speed of the ball of 350 feet per second and one of 1120 feet will make the point clear.

VII

The most interesting question arises, that if the well-driven ball starts off almost horizontally and then begins to ascend, what is the line of its flight or its trajectory? Golfers generally have the crudest notions on this point. For the most part they seem to assume that the trajectory is represented by an even segment of a circle, having its vertex or highest point just about half-way along. This is absolutely wrong. Even if there were no spin at all, this would not be the case, the vertex being much nearer the end of the flight than the beginning of it, as in the case of the rifle bullet. On the other hand, many players on seeing a ball well driven constantly remark on what they think is after all a fancy of theirs, that when the ball has gone a long way it suddenly seems to take a new lease of life, and to rise up in the air before moving down towards earth. They will be surprised to know that it is not

fancy, that the ball does rise. The fact is that the line of flight of a well-driven ball with under-spin, from its starting to its highest point, is partly concave upwards, and this fact is only evident to the eye when it has travelled some distance. Such a ball is in effect the pull or the slice turned round from the flat in an upward direction. Eventually gravity gets the better of the ball and pulls it down.

With the help of the *formulæ* that he prepared after several years' study of the matter, and with the assistance of Mr. Wood, whom he regarded as the quickest and most accurate reckoner of abstruse scientific quantities that he had ever encountered, the professor calculated exactly the trajectories of golf balls driven under many different circumstances. Among them he showed the short line of the flight of a ball to which no initial rotation or under-spin was imparted. While the other balls were started off almost horizontally, it was necessary in this case to give the ball an initial elevation of 15 degrees—that is to deliberately hit it upwards at that angle—in order to make it rise at all. Regarding this trajectory Professor Tait said most significantly that it is “characteristic of a well-known class of drives, usually produced when a too high tee is employed, and the player stands somewhat behind his ball. Notice particularly how much the carry and time of flight are reduced, though the initial speed is the same. The slight under-spin makes an extraordinary difference, producing, as it were, an unbending of the path throughout its whole length, and thus greatly increasing the portion above the horizon.” The run of this ball on alighting is greater than in the other

cases, owing to there being no backspin, but it cannot make up for the short flight.

Concerning another short drive of the same class, Professor Tait remarks: "In spite of its 50 per cent. greater angle of initial elevation, the carry of the non-rotating projectile is little more than half that of the other, and it takes only one-third of the time spent by the other in the air. But the contrast shows how much more important (so far as carry is concerned) is a moderate amount of under-spin than large initial elevation. And we can easily see that initial elevation, always undesirable (unless there is a hazard close to the tee), as it exposes the ball too soon to the action of the wind where it is strongest, may be entirely dispensed with."

A question which may have been in the reader's mind for some time is as to whether, since the effect of under-spin is to make the trajectory turn upwards as it were, excessive under-spin would not result in the ball taking an absolutely upward trajectory and then curling over and right round. In actual practice so much under-spin could not be put on to a golf ball as would enable it to get the better of gravity and other circumstances to this extent, but theoretically such an evolution would be described if the conditions were equal to it. Professor Tait says: "The kink can be obtained in a striking manner when we use as a projectile one of the large balloons of thin rubber which are so common. We have only to 'slice' the balloon sharply downwards in a nearly vertical plane with the flat hand." It must be remembered that in the case of a very bad slice the ball sometimes does actually curl right round towards the finish of its run.

VIII

There are many other incontrovertible and very interesting conclusions arrived at as the result of the reckoning of this distinguished scientist which one would like to discuss if there were room for it. It is enough to say at the finish that while these reflections will serve to give the golfer a more intelligent view of the scientific aspect of the game and its mysteries, and very likely even tend to a change in his policy in some departments, he will not be led towards any disbelief in the standard methods of good driving or to any deliberate seeking or regulation of under-spin, the fact being that more than a century of play and groping about in unscientific darkness brought the player to the discovery of the way in which the longest ball could be obtained, *i.e.* to the way in which translatory force and rotation were blended to the best effect. The stance and the swing, when properly performed with a proper driver, bring about that blend, though generally the player has been blissfully unconscious of the part they have played in conveying rotation to the ball. A pregnant paragraph by the scientist may be quoted at the end: "The pace which the player can give the clubhead at the moment of impact depends to a very considerable extent on the *relative* motion of his two hands (to which is due the 'nip') during the immediately preceding two-hundredth of a second, while the amount of beneficial spin is seriously diminished by even a trifling upward concavity of the path of the head during the ten-thousandth of a second occupied by

the blow. It is mainly in apparently trivial matters like these, which are placidly spoken of by the mass of golfers under the general title of knock, that lie the very great differences in drives effected under precisely similar external conditions by players equal in strength, agility, and (except to an extremely well-trained and critical eye) even in style."

I should explain that all these things were told by Professor Tait, not in simple language to an assembly of golfers, but in complicated terms to a learned body of scientists, and I have thus endeavoured to explain his meaning in a manner that all can understand, and in some cases—as in that of the question of the proper centering of the rubber-cored ball to carry it forward to its application to the new conditions of play that have been introduced since his life and studies came to an end.

IX

What is the longest possible drive by our best driver under the best conditions? That is a question which it is impossible to answer, simply because the best conditions cannot be defined. In practical golf they are an impossible ideal, and one never knows how far in certain existing circumstances that ideal is approached. This brings us to see the futility of comparing one drive with another, or even of regarding any particular drive as the best on record, in the sense that it was the best that had ever been accomplished, just because it was the longest that had been measured. The very slightest difference in the conditions, or in the circumstances of the run of the ball, may cause one drive to be what some

people would call a record, and another, equally good in execution and strength, to be comparatively poor. For example, think of what enormous importance is the nature of the place on which the ball gets its first pitch. Let it pitch against an incline ever so slight, or against a knob in the ground no bigger than a pigeon's egg, and the sting of the shot is plucked. As in the case of so many other arguments, this one as to the overwhelming influence of conditions in long driving, and record driving, is best set forth by the *reductio ad absurdum*, and it is sufficient to point out that if a child tapped a ball off a tee on to a tolerably steep and smooth incline, the ball would run to the edge of the world unless stopped by a change in the conditions.

It is more to the point—but not much more—to consider how far a ball might be driven under conditions which might be described as nearly ideal, but strictly fair in the sense that the force of gravity by means of an incline, or wind, should not assist in the propulsion of the ball, while on the other hand neither wind nor slope should be adverse to it. To create such nearly ideal conditions, under which we would solve this question as to the longest possible drive, we would need to enclose a long shed or gallery, down which the ball was to travel, so that it should be entirely protected from wind influence, and then we should have to lay a special fairway of some smooth, hard substance that would afford the least imaginable resistance and friction to the ball when running. Asphalte would be good for this purpose, but polished marble or granite would be better, and if some millionaire enthusiast desired to solve this longest-possible-drive question these are the conditions that

I would recommend to him. Now, then, how long would that gallery need to be? How far could that ball be driven? In the open, on perfectly level and on smooth slippery turf, which after wind and warmth is at its fastest, such as one gets often at St. Andrews, a drive that approached 320 yards would at the same time be approaching very near record for fair conditions. We have this to work on. How many yards should we have to put on for the perfect pitch and the perfectly level, hard, smooth, and frictionless floor in our driving gallery? When you come to think it over in this way, it is rather a pretty problem. Of course, in the absence of the millionaire and the gallery, there is no satisfactory answer, though Professor Tait would have made a close estimate possibly. But put the question to the next party of golfers among whom you happen to be included, and see what widely varying answers you will get. In the meantime one may suggest 500 yards.

THE FABRIC OF THE GAME

I

WE boast constantly of the traditions of our game of golf, and well may we do so, for they are glorious, and they bring with them a great responsibility for their perpetuation. Some day in the distant future a far-off generation may be moved to build a Temple of Golf. There is the nucleus of the idea already within the house of the Royal and Ancient Club. In stone and on canvas it will tell the story of the great deeds of the heroes of the past as it is told in the national palaces and halls of England and of France.

In the path that will lead from the gates to the doors of the temple there will be a giant monument of the fairest hero of them all. It will show in white marble a lithe-limbed player at the finish of a St. Andrews drive with his features alight with the full joy of the game at the richest time of his youthful manhood—a fine, a happy, a lovable face. On one side of the pedestal there will be depicted the trophies of the links. On the other side there will be a terrier, of whom it shall be indicated that his name was "Nails." On the back of the pedestal there will be a group of golfers, representing in them the golf world far and wide, and they will be showing by their

manner and their actions that they are acclaiming their hero, and that they esteem him for his golfing and manly worth and all his noble qualities. And on the front of the pedestal there will be cut a scene of war, with the Riet River flowing by, and in the shade of the trees on the bank there will lie a prostrate figure with a smile still left on the happy face. It will tell that a great soldier-golfer has done his duty, and that from the African veldt his soul has gone forward to the consummation of its greatness. No words will need to be carved on this monument of glory. It will bear the simple inscription, "F. G. Tait. Died 1900," and the men who gaze upon it in the far-off time will bare and bow their heads, and will walk silently into the temple.

There will be things to wonder at within. There will be the Hall of Kings. Giant canvases will show Charleses and Jameses playing their game of golf on the links of Leith, and there will be Mary Queen of Scots with clubs in her hand on St. Andrews course. Further on there will be King William IV. and his consort Adelaide, giving their countenance to the game on historic occasions; and then there will surely be another picture with the simple title "1863," upon which will be recognised the Prince of Wales, who became King Edward VII., being then in office as captain of the premier club. Paintings of more modern date will show Kaiser Wilhelm giving some encouragement to the golfers of the Fatherland, and the King of Spain first wooing a British princess on the course of Biarritz, and then paying his royal respects, but still humble and sincere, to the game itself at San Sebastian. Kings and queens, princes and princesses, golfers all, and

earnest ones, players of a right royal and ancient game.

There will be a Hall of Founders, in which will be immortalised the great men who in the early times laid the foundations of the game, and of its most historic institutions. The largest frame in the room will hold a painting bearing the title "Magna Charta, 1553," and the picture will depict a scene in which the Provost and Magistrates of St. Andrews are granting leave to Archbishop Hamilton to place rabbits on the links at St. Andrews. The Archbishop is writing his signature to the parchment which, with the authority of the chapter, ratifies and approves the rights of the community to the links, more especially for the purpose of "playing at golff, futball, schuteing at all gamis, with all uther maner of pastyme." There will be a fine picture of a man of noble countenance, a wig upon his head and robes around him, as he is seated in his chair with his hand upon a table where rests a mace. This is Duncan Forbes of Culloden, Lord President of the Court of Session, and first captain of the Gentlemen Golfers—now going by the name of the Honourable Company—in 1744. A great man was Duncan Forbes, and he played for the Silver Club. A poet of his own time sung of him:

"Yea, here great Forbes, patron of the just,
The dread of villains, and the good man's trust,
When spent with toils in serving humankind,
His body recreates, and unbends his mind."

There is evidence that he played for the club in 1745, and it is believed that this must have been his last round, for the rising of the clans just at that time compelled him to set out for the north, where he

exerted the utmost of his influence to prevent them from joining the cause of the Young Pretender. There will be a picture of Francis, fifth Earl of Wemyss, ancestor of great players, himself playing the game at Gosford, and there will surely be recovered for that Temple the canvas that we know, showing one of the most famous and the most worthy of the fathers of golf, and another captain of the Company, William St. Clair of Roslin, of whom it was said that his skill at golf and archery were such that the common people thought that he must be in league with Satan. "A man considerably above six feet, with dark-grey locks, a form upright, but gracefully so, thin-flanked and broad-shouldered, built it would seem for the business of war or the chase, a noble eye, of chastened pride and undoubted authority, and features handsome and striking in their general effect. As schoolboys we crowded to see him perform feats of strength and skill in the old Scottish games of golf and archery." That is what was written of William St. Clair of Roslin by Sir Walter Scott, and Sir George Chalmers painted the picture of him addressing a golf ball, the picture that they must have in the Temple. And there will be many others, all telling of the excellence and the dignity and even the skill of those great golfers of the first age of the game.

Then there will be a Hall of Science, and there will be a fresco on the wall showing the great Professor Tait with compasses and instruments calculating strange curves, many golf balls strewn about the ground.

And there will be one main Gallery of Masters, and there will be perpetuated the names and forms

and feats of the men who went farthest in their skill at the noble game. There will be Allan Robertson and old Tom Morris in a great four-some, and there will be a young man with a wild look of fear on his face, stepping into a boat at North Berwick to be sailed across the water to St. Andrews, where a loved one lay dying. There will be Jamie Anderson and Bob Ferguson, triple Champions, and there will be John Ball, Open and Amateur Champion at once and six times Amateur Champion. He will be painted mounted on a charger going to the war. There will be many masters besides.

In the centre there will be three statues grouped together. One of them will be sculptured on an Athenian model. It will show a fine player at the finish of his drive, and there will be on the base the simple inscription "Style." That will be Harry Vardon. Another will show a man of stern countenance with thick wrists tightened upon a mashie, and that will be named "Accuracy." The man is Taylor. And the third of these figures will show a man of solemn look, like that upon some ancient busts. That will be "Perseverance," and surely the people will know that it is James Braid that is meant. The famous Triumvirate! Those future golfers will walk their way through these halls and through the gallery of the Temple of Golf that will be raised, and a great awe of the game will come upon them. It is as if generations, ages of great golfers will look hard but not unkindly at these passers-by, and will seem to cry aloud, "We made it! We made it! Preserve it! Preserve it!" Not the game alone, but its glory—its tradition.

II

There are many full-blooded golfers who, if in the light of knowledge and experience they could have their choice to live their golfing lives over again, with the special advantage of picking their own period and place for play, would hold up their hands for Leith and the closing years of the seventeenth century. They could be greatly earnest about their golf in those days, and there was colour and richness about it. Here it was that King Charles was playing his game when the news came to him, according to famous tradition, of the insurrection and rebellion in Ireland. And another future King of England is generally believed to have played great games on Leith links, and perhaps the most interesting monument of ancient golf that remains to us to-day is still to be found in Edinburgh, commemorating a great game that was once played, in which James, Duke of York, afterwards James II., had a hand. This house is that old one in Canongate which is numbered 77, on the north side a little above Queensberry House. On the wall above what at one time was the doorway of this house there is a stone bearing this inscription in Latin: "Cum victor ludo scotis qui proprius esset ter tres victores post redimitus avos patersonus humo tunc educebat in altum hanc quae victores tot tulit una domum"; and, separately, there is the line in English, "I hate no person," which effectually settles the name of the man most concerned, as the letters of these words are nothing more than an anagrammatical transposition of the letters of the name of John

Patersone, who is the hero of the story of the great game. High up, near the top of this five-storey building, is another tablet bearing a coat of arms, on which there are three pelicans and three mullets, while for crest there is a dexter hand grasping a golf club, and the motto is "Far and sure." The point of the story is that this house was built by a poor cobbler out of a share of the proceeds of a wager won by the Duke on a foursome, in which he, the cobbler, was his partner.

The generally accepted story, in which there is no hole to be picked, is that one day, during their attendance at the Scottish Court, two English noblemen, who had played a little golf in their time, had a discussion, in which the Duke of York joined, as to whether it were more of an English or a Scottish game. Eventually it was determined that the question, so far as their own satisfaction was concerned, should be decided by an appeal to the game itself, that is to say, the Englishmen, who affected to be of mind that it was an English game, agreed that they would play the Duke and any other Scotsman that he would choose to partner him for a large stake of money. The Duke conceived that he could do himself a little good in the affair, since his acceptance of such a challenge and his standing forward in the name of Scotland would be good for the sustenance of his claim to the character of a Scot, and would please the people of the country. So the match being made, the Duke sent out agents to scour the town in search of the best partner for him that they could find, and when found he was to be brought forward, irrespective of his circumstances or his station in life. Eventually the man whom they selected for

this onerous task was the poor shoemaker who went by the name of John Patersone. He was very fearful as to how he should perform with so much responsibility depending upon him; but the Duke was evidently a good golfer, to the extent that he encouraged his partner and did his utmost to make him feel comfortable, whereupon Patersone braced himself for the struggle and said that he would do his best. The Duke and the cobbler were easily victorious, whereupon the former gave his partner the half of the stake that he had won, and with this money the house in Canongate was built, the Duke himself causing the escutcheon, bearing the arms of the family of Patersone, to be fixed in the wall.

III

It must be seen to that the canker of commercialism is never permitted to eat its way into the game, for if it were the game would be ruined, as other games and sports have been ruined in that way. It is not that there is any serious danger of golf coming by such a fate, for its people are too well imbued with what might be called the moral sporting sense, and have too much discrimination to permit themselves to be deceived by the insidiousness of the temptations of the commercial adventurer. But it is well that the situation and its weaknesses should be fully realised, so that all players and lovers of the game, of high and low degree, and of long experience and short, may be fully alive to them, and so on their guard. And it must be considered, at the outset of any reflection upon such matters as this, as the most simple and ele-

mentary principle, and that which is most indisputable, that there is money in everything in which masses of people take an interest, and the greater the interest the more money is there in it—money for the adventurers who come forward to feed that interest in whatsoever guise they may come. Golf has become a passion with a large section of mankind, and therefore there is much money in it for those who will humour this passion, and there are many evidences that the outside world is not unappreciative of this circumstance.

It is said by some of the best judges of golf, that the rubber-cored ball has spoiled the game. That is a matter upon which opinions to some extent differ; but at all events it can hardly be held that the new ball has improved the game, that is to say, that it has made it any better game than it used to be, though it may be admitted that, by making it easier to play, it has resulted in greater enjoyment being given to a vast number of people than would have been if it had never been introduced. But, in any case, why have we the rubber-cored ball in practically exclusive use at the present time, when the feeling of the golf world on its first introduction was overwhelmingly against it? It is due entirely to commercialism, to that and to nothing else. If enterprising business men who cared for their bank accounts first and their golf afterwards, had not seen that there were fortunes in the rubber-cored ball if it were forced on the players, there would have been no rubber-cored ball to-day. The golfing public was quite compelled to use it, though it may not have been realised at the time, and one result was that the game had to pass through a period of

unrest and inconvenience lasting for three or four seasons, while courses were being altered and lengthened, the new ball was being improved, and its various manufacturers were engaged in the attempt to exterminate each other, and there was a foolish interest generated in the breaking day by day of the record scores of courses. All this upheaval was due entirely to the introduction of an alien element into the spirit of the links, the element of commercialism. Of course one must admit that it is this commercialism that brings about many of the greatest aids to our completer civilisation and comfort, and it has not to be regarded as an enemy to all things. It is the moving spirit of progress and improvement; but it is not generally welcome to golf, because we want neither progress nor improvement in the actual game of golf, but simply the game as it has been handed down to us. In this matter we are entirely and wisely conservative. With the rubber ball in vogue, the case now is that a great industry has been built up, in which there are hundreds of thousands of pounds of capital involved, and in the outer zone of golf there is a desperate war being waged by rival manufacturers. The golf world has to take care that this war is kept where it is, and perhaps all the better if it goes on.

Generally such a thing is to the benefit of the golfer; but all the time there are guerilla raids into the inner zone, and while the amateur player has not been in any way affected by this commercialism, that can hardly be said of all others associated with the game. Business is not sport, and

sport is not business, and to a certain extent the legitimate interests of the golfer and the ball manufacturer are opposed in this matter. Just as it was with bicycles in their "boom" days, and as it is with motors now, it is to the interests of manufacturers to get their specialities used on important occasions, and when successes are likely to be made with them. The certificate of merit which is thus given is very valuable and is talked about. The less thoughtful public says to itself, "Surely, then, this thing is better than others," and buys it accordingly. Such a conclusion is not logical, and, of course, is quite unwarranted. Successes achieved with it certainly indicate that there cannot be anything wrong with an article, but they do not prove superiority. They could only do that if it were established beforehand that the human element in the equation were either inferior or not more than equal to the human elements in opposition. It is the same as if they were to advertise and make a great point of the fact that the winner of the Derby was saddled with a particular make of saddle. But in the racing world they believe primarily in their horses. The case with golf at present is not in the least serious. One may feel sure there is no danger of amateur players giving way to money temptations of any sort, or temptations in kind either. The sporting sentiment of the game is too strong for that. If it were not for that the fear for the safe future of golf would be great. Every sport that has been attacked in this way has been killed from the point of view of good health and purity.

There is another possible contingency, though as yet a remote one, in which commercialism may

infringe injuriously upon the game, and that is in exploiting it as a spectacle and charging "gate money" to the public. Some people say that golf is not a game that can be used as a spectacle like football and cricket; but that is not entirely true. The interest that is created in cricket and football matches is largely of an artificial and manufactured character. A good drive at golf is quite as fine a thing to look at as a snick to the boundary on the cricket field. Where the difference comes in from the public point of view at present is in the fact that in the case of an important cricket match the public are brought to understand that an enhanced value is attached to each stroke, and therefore there is the more interest in watching it played. Would there not be at least as much public interest in watching a great player attempt to hole a curly two-yard putt if a championship or a side wager of a couple of hundred pounds were depending on it? The temperament of the spectator counts for something in this question of what is a good game for a spectacle, and it has to be remembered that the temperaments of the British sporting crowds have been trained towards cricket and football. Fifteen years ago there was not more than a tenth of the number of spectators at the big football matches as there are in these days, though there were practically as many of them played. And that golf has an attraction, which might very easily become an overpowering one for the spectator, was proved when the international foursome between the leading professionals for £400 was played in 1905, when, on three courses in different parts of the country, there was an average

attendance of spectators of about ten thousand each day. That was simply because the match had been talked about and a special interest had become attached to it.

On one of these courses "gate money" was charged, and again in 1906, on the occasion of another professional foursome, a charge for admission to the course to see the play was made by the local club. It has been mutely understood as a principle that no such charges should ever be made, being a violation of the spirit in which golf is played—the spirit that suggests that the game is for the men who play it, and for nobody else—and it can be fancied that the success of the "gate" on these occasions may have put ideas into the minds of enterprising commercial people, as indeed it is known it did. There is the danger, then, that some time an attempt may be made to hold golf matches as a show. If it were successful it would mean a complete upheaval of the game. If the professionals found that they "drew" to the extent of hundreds of pounds at a time, they would naturally be discontented with moderate fees for playing. They would demand shares of the gate; they would receive perhaps hundreds for playing on important occasions, and the modest, unassuming working professional, as we know him now, would exist no longer, the cohesion between the two sections in our little state of golf would be loosened, amateurism might suffer if only by the sense of mediocrity that would be thrust upon it, and the game would not be the same. All the tricks of trades would come into golf at once—"signing on," bartering, bluffing, and even cheating. Considering the enormous "boom" in golf that is

going on at present, and the millions of money that are spent on it in one way and another, it is wonderful that it has retained its purity,—not wonderful, perhaps, when you take the moral sporting quality of the golfer into consideration,—but still wonderful on an ordinary reckoning. Its continued purity may have given rise to an exaggerated sense of security. Certainly none of us can believe in the possibility of its sinking to the state which has just been suggested; but it is better to realise that the facts are as stated, and that there is the chance of such a thing happening at some future time, so that at the first sign of the enemy's advance the golf world may be armed and ready to attack and kill it. It is one of those evils that will come insidiously when it does come, and will have gained a hold before we are aware of its presence.

Another feature of this increase of commercialism in relation to golf is in the realisation of the magnetic power of the game by promoters of building estates, and private persons who exploit the game in one way or another, chiefly through the medium of new courses. In these cases there is no great harm done, but they are an infringement in some sense of the principle that the game should not be played for the benefit of other people. Everywhere speculators in estates are making golf courses first and building houses afterwards; and the other day, when such a course, made with this object, was established not far from London, there were "press views" and all the other accompaniments of the launching of a commercial undertaking, while it was announced that to promote its future success matches would be arranged between leading professionals, and efforts would be made to

enlist the sympathy of the public in them—to the advantage of the speculators who were sinking their money in the development of this estate. We do not like the look of this. Here the game is to be played not for the sake of the game altogether, but for these proprietors of land and houses. It is most obvious commercialism. And it is certainly not golf.

Some golfers may say that after all they are not very much affected by this sort of thing so far, and are not likely to be. Is it worth while bothering about? they may ask. A man who has the true spirit of the links within him will not ask the question, nor will he think that this writer has laboured the warning that is hereby conveyed. Of all the things in golf that matter the most for its future welfare, this is the most important, for it might conceivably be a question of life and death with the game, and it is time that the whole of the golf world understood and appreciated, and then at every opportunity henceforth, in small matters as well as in large ones, set itself against all influences that are not for the good of the game. It is right and proper that the makers of golfing goods should practise their commercialism to the utmost extent of their capacity outside the area of the game, but not inside our doors. It is ultimately to the advantage of the players that they should do so. But except those who make these goods, we deny that others who do not play have the right to make money out of our game, if they might spoil it for ourselves in so doing.

IV

Just lately certain desperadoes, whom one need hardly say had no connection with the premier club, held a bogey competition over the new course at St. Andrews. A while previously some others were reported to have held a similar contest over the old course itself, which was worse. Here in St. Andrews it is almost held as a sin merely to mention the name of bogey, or even to refer to it somewhat indefinitely as "the Colonel." All know that the Royal and Ancient Club will have nothing whatever to do with the idea of bogey competitions, and though they are common enough in these days, you generally find the best class of golfers of the old school fighting shy of the idea, and to the best clubs, quite apart from the R. and A., the idea is still taboo. The standpoint which these clubs and these men take is that ordinary match-play is the true golf, and when it comes to needing a variation from it for special purposes, there is the score game in reserve. These two, they say, are ample for all purposes, and any other forms of golf that may be invented are not real golf; they are more or less of travesties, they are needless complications, and for the most part they are the inventions of faddists, which, if universally sanctioned by the community, would lead to the production of other fads even worse, so that innumerable fantastic changes would be rung on this fine, simple game of golf to its undoing, since it cannot possibly be better than, or even so good as, in its simplest form. Already in some parts of the country

there are four-ball foursomes against bogey being played, and some wild ideas for new-fangled competitions have been sent across the Atlantic to us from America. That is why bogey is never so much as mentioned at St. Andrews, and why the surest way that the Southron, on making his first visit to the classic headquarters of the game, may be made to feel uncommonly small and to wish that he had not been so inquisitive, is to ask on playing the first hole—which often enough leaves you a pretty stiff carry over the Swilcan Burn from your tee shot,—whether it is a bogey 4 or 5. The town authorities notify you by printed placard that they have the power by by-law to fine you for playing on the old course with iron clubs only, and also for practising putting on the eighteenth green, and one would never be much surprised if it were made a matter of ten shillings and costs, or a week in default, for playing there against old bogey. Certain it is that there are many good golfers there who would be glad to hear of such a penalty.

The experienced man who tries to take a broad view of this minor question of golfing politics generally comes to the conclusion that the anti-bogeyists are quite right, and that we do not want any complications in the game, and he takes it particularly in mind that the bogey system is entirely the result of the modern craze for pot and medal hunting, since it was designed solely and exclusively as a new form of competition. One would not dream nowadays of going out to play a game with a friend, each man playing his holes against bogey. Therefore there is nothing friendly and nothing sociable in the idea, and it is not golf, and

it is condemned all the more inasmuch as its special object is to release erring players from the penalties of their errors, such as they would have to pay for in stroke play. It is therefore an encouragement to mediocrity. At the same time our broad-minded critic would agree that this bogey has been in for a good many years now, has outlived the attacks that have been made upon it, and has certainly established a place for itself in the golfing scheme of things which nothing seems likely to disturb. You generally find that as a golfer gets on in experience he cares less and less for bogey play, if he ever cared for it at all; but the new generation like it apparently, and will have it. Therefore we must tolerate it. It is a matter of some satisfaction to notice that more and more do clubs begin to make a standard reckoning of the value of their holes on the par system instead of the bogey. There is no sort of sense in saying that the bogey of a particular hole is 4 or 5, or anything else that it may be put down at. The majority of "bogey 5's" are real 4's, and it is difficult to see what is the object of placing a standard value on a hole unless that standard represents faultless play by a good man, as the par figure does, and not such play as may include two half-spoiled shots or one completely fozzled one, as the bogey figure frequently allows. It is often the case that at a "bogey 5" on a suburban course a good player can make a complete bungle of his second shot and still do the 5 with some ease. What, then, is the use of this sort of valuation of the holes on various courses?

So what with his somewhat surreptitious appearance at St. Andrews, and many violent attacks

that have been made upon him, some men saying with withering sarcasm that they think they have heard of him before somewhere, the poor old Colonel has been having a rather exciting and not entirely happy time of it in recent seasons, and one feels a certain amount of pity for him, recognising that he really has given much pleasure to many players. In this sympathetic mood one may listen patiently to the story of his career. He has seen considerable service now, for he became attached to golf at the beginning of its boom days. The origin of the association was curious. Although some have it that bogey was born at Elie, a Coventry gentleman, Mr. Hugh Rotherham, is more generally believed to have been the first to come by the germ of the idea. This was in December 1890, when what was called the scratch score of the Coventry course was taken, and there was given to each hole a figure which was supposed to represent the scratch value. This was called the "ground score," and some six months later, when the idea had become well assimilated, Mr. Rotherham offered a prize for a competition in which the players would play against this ground score; while in the autumn of the same year the club put up a challenge cup for annual competition on the same lines. Thus already the idea was established, but not the name.

About this time some of the members of the Coventry club went as a party to Great Yarmouth, where the idea was explained to Dr. Thos. Browne, R.N., honorary secretary of the club. He thought well of its possibilities and advantages, and, taking considerable interest in it, wrote to various prominent

golfers asking them their views of the advisability or otherwise of introducing this "ground score" into the general routine of competition golf. For the most part the replies were favourable.

Now one day Dr. Browne went out to play against a friend of his, Major Charles A. Wellman, on this system, and that winter the "bogey man" song was the hit of the pantomimes in the music-halls.

"Hush! Hush! Hush!

Here comes the Bogey man!

So hide your head beneath the clothes,

He'll catch you if he can!"

were the words of the refrain that gave a creepy feeling to the little children of the day. "He'll catch you if he can!" There was the idea of bogey in golf, and it flashed across the mind of Major Wellman when he was playing this game and getting caught by bogey. "Why," said he to Dr. Browne, "this player of yours is a regular bogey man." In that chance remark a considerable piece of golfing history was made, for bogey was made for golf. Dr. Browne thought this name was excellent, and should be adopted, as it was by the Great Yarmouth Club.

A little while afterwards he went on a golfing holiday to the south coast, and playing one day at the course of the United Service Club at Alverstoke in Hampshire, he informed his hosts that he had brought with him a friend who was a very modest, quiet fellow and a steady golfer, who played a uniformly good but never a brilliant game. He prayed that he might be permitted to introduce him to the United Service Club as an honorary

member, and accordingly, in the continuance of his little pleasantry, he presented him, in the way of an explanation of the “bogey man game,” to the late Captain Seely Vidal, R.E., who was honorary secretary of the club, and to Dr. Walter Reid, R.N.

“Capital!” they said; they would certainly have the bogey man as a golfer, and after working out a score for him for that course they went out to play with him.

“Stay!” said Captain Vidal at the moment of starting. “We must proceed in a proper service way. Every member of this club has a proper service rank. Our new invisible member, who never makes a mistake, surely ought to be a commanding officer. He must be a colonel.” And then saluting, he added, “Colonel Bogey! We are delighted to find you on the links, sir. I couldn’t well say see you.”

After that, wherever Dr. Browne went in the course of his golfing pilgrimages, he introduced “his friend” in the name of Colonel Bogey. Several bogey matches were played at the United Service Club, and they were reported in the papers, with some explanation of the new system. So the Coventry, Great Yarmouth, and United Service Clubs had all a hand in the establishment of the idea, and Dr. Browne, Major Charles Wellman, and Captain Seely Vidal were Bogey’s godfathers in his baptism. It is quite likely that the golfers of Elie worked out a bogey of their own independently.

V

“Ever let the Fancy roam,
Pleasure never is at home.”

So Keats did sing. And, alas! there are even strange golfers who are sighing always for newfanglements, feeling that the things they cannot or must not have, are much better than the things they are blessed with. Yet are the things that are in golf better than the things that might be if out-and-out Progressives had their way, and in this matter we shall sing a hymn of praise to the old school and its famous traditions, being something of a brake on these Progressives. Consider what were otherwise the possibilities of the game if it fell into the hands of innovators.

Lately a story was printed and spread all about, that in some secret fields a great champion was practising with a new ball of extraordinary manufacture, with which he was constantly getting at least fifty yards farther with his drive than he could with the ordinary rubber-cored affair, that is to say, he was regularly driving from 250 to 300 yards! Now, some of us have heard of that ball before, but shall believe in it only when we see it, and shall then cry aloud for its extinction, even if that dreaded Golf Union has to be established for the purpose, as probably it would need to be. But some people ask why it is wrong to sigh for more and more length in the drive; why should not our old men drive all the long holes in two, and our young men do them with a drive and a pitch, and play the short holes with their

putters? They say there is enormous pleasure in length, and that the rubber-core has given increased enjoyment to scores of thousands of players. Which is true, the last. But the more length you get the less golf there is in your play. If length is all that is wanted, why not go shooting instead of golfing? You can shoot a bullet a whole mile, and are not bothered to trudge after it. Fatal points against the 300-yard ball are, that a large proportion of golfers would lose sight of it before it came to rest—and where would be their pleasure then?—and that it would upset the construction of all our courses, since all the bunkers would be in the wrong places, and the links would all be too short. More land and huge sums of money would be needed by every club. The clubs had one experience of this when the rubber-core came in; depend on it they will not have another. By all means improve our present sort of balls, which is what makers are doing, and incidentally they are making them go a little farther, which is excusable. But no more revolutions. As it happened, the story of the professional and the new ball was untrue.

The news of something that took place recently in golfing India came over the sea, and the committees and members of very small clubs were fired with a new idea. They are rather whimsical with their golf in our colonies and dependencies at times, and it has been said facetiously that the ships that come home from there ought to be put in quarantine near St. Andrews for a while, to make certain that there are none of these ideas on board. The Royal Bombay Club, thinking possibly that bunkers in the same places always are monotonous, and moreover

that, being in the same place, they upset one's calculations so much when the wind changes, went in, according to report, for movable bunkers! They made them from hurdles, and they could move them about the course according to the weather and the committee's fancy.

In some places, as already hinted, they have been trying a strange kind of game called "a four-ball foursome against bogey," being a blend of many things most objectionable to the old spirit. This is the kind of golf that would be exceedingly popular if people generally went mad with the revolutionary idea and held executions in Trafalgar Square. In the meantime it does not "take on." And a new kind of multi-match lately came over from America. Then play, say, six a side, but only one ball to each side, the whole dozen players starting off together. They do not play alternately, but each man is chosen for the team according to his special abilities. One man is a specialist in long driving, another in his brassey play, a third with his irons, a fourth with the short approaches, a fifth with his niblick, and a sixth with his putter. When within fifty yards of the green the captain sings out for No. 4, and No. 5 is wanted when the ball is in a gutter. A man might not have a shot to play the whole way round. Great skill would be needed in the selection of the team. For a match on a short course the wise captain might leave out his brassey man and put in, say, a fisherman, if there were many water hazards on that course. But it is not golf, and never will be.

From the same source there emanates another idea in competitions. This is for stroke play, and all the men who enter play the first hole, one after the

other. Those men who take most strokes to it retire from the competition. The others proceed, and there is the same weeding out process at the second hole, and so on until there are only two players left, and then the first man who wins a hole from the other wins the competition.

A possibility, which is none the less dreadful because there is some good common sense in the idea from which it springs, is that there will be examinations in the rules, which all must pass either before being elected to full membership of a golf club or before being allowed to take part in competitions. It is a certain fact that two golfers out of every three—at least—are hazy on many important points in the rules. Three British clubs have already held such examinations, with startling results. Scratch men were plucked! How curious it would be if the favourite for a championship were disqualified in this way. Of course the examiners would trip up the candidates by tricky riders to the rules, and as my artist friend, Mr. E. W. Mitchell, suggested, good questions will be: "A is your ball, B is your banker's ball, and C is the hole (all being within a circle ten inches in diameter). Play one off two and lose!" Also, "What happens when a bull sits on your ball—(1) in match; (2) in medal play?"

As it is said, there is no telling what we may have next, particularly as a patent was recently applied for on behalf of a new club which had a sliding lid bottom, covering a receptacle in the head of the club, in which the golfer might keep his matches and his money!

VI

Now and then a section of the golfing community has the appearance of fretting for a new government of the game. The freedom that it has always enjoyed, and in which it is superior to any other game that has a right to be compared to it for quality, interest, and popularity, has become irksome. It is felt that there can be disadvantages in too much freedom, and so these people sigh to be placed under a yoke—a yoke of their own choosing, but none the less stern and powerful and, above all, active. These agitations, if they are to be dignified with such a name, commonly begin in the dullest days of winter, when both links and livers are abnormally heavy, and they flicker out again in the spring. Usually the establishment of a new county golfing union is the signal for the commencement of the argument in favour of the deposition of St. Andrews and the establishment of a new parliament of golf. By this time county unions are no novelty. The Yorkshire and the Nottinghamshire Unions—and particularly the former—are now old-established and flourishing institutions; but latterly this movement towards unions has much increased, and Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Gloucestershire, and others have joined in it and settled their constitutions. Then there are in existence the Welsh Union, the Sussex Union, and various others of smaller activity. The formation of these unions has been in itself a proceeding of some significance; but the establishment of the new Midland Association is greater, for here you have three or four unions making common cause

for the furtherance of their own ideas and projects, and becoming a compact, circumscribed, and very nearly autonomous community, taking a considerable piece of the golfing map to themselves, and embracing no small or unimportant section of the golfing population. First you had the county unions; now the grouping of these unions into associations. Obviously, the next and easy step will be a combination of associations. Yorkshire and Wales might come to an understanding with the Midlands, and before one could shout "Fore!" there might be the whole country under the guidance, not to say domination, of a union of associations. Members of clubs would *per se* be affiliated to it, and would give tacit allegiance to it. That is simply a possibility of evolution.

So far the programmes of the unions and associations are simple and unpretentious. They will start country competitions, inter-county tournaments, standardise handicaps, regulate local rules, and so forth. Unpretentious in a sense these matters are; but yet they will make for much in the whole sum of golf procedure. Then there are no authoritative rules for bogey play which many people want; the associations may make them for themselves, and make them binding upon their members, and give rulings upon points of dispute or difficulty that may arise in regard to them, since St. Andrews will have nothing to do with bogey. They will do all the many things that St. Andrews is too indifferent to do.

There you have it! How about the coming of the day when, old-established, firm, and powerful, the combined associations find that they are doing nearly everything, and that St. Andrews is doing almost

nothing? Will it not be an easy thing, and one which will suggest itself, to cut the knot that ties them to the old and respected guardian of our golf, and to go forth with a new and revolutionary programme of government, which shall include even the very championships and the rules themselves? This is not a fanciful speculation; it is logical and—as some who have brought themselves to the serious study of the future would say—almost inevitable. It would be according to the natural processes of history.

Let them disclaim as they please, be as loyal to the existing order of things as possible, it is still the fact that these unions and associations are a menace to St. Andrews. By evolution from them rather than by direct establishment is a British Golfing Union likely to come about, if one ever does. This is essentially a democratic movement. With the vast influx of new players the feeling in golf is infinitely more democratic than it was five years ago, and the people are now chafing at the indifference of St. Andrews and the championship group of clubs, and are calling for a ruling body that will give them new and simpler laws, that will regulate the championships better, and hold them on a greater variety of courses, organise inter-county competitions, and so on. St. Andrews—by which is meant the Royal and Ancient Club—is the old and self-established, almost hereditary House of Lords that dozes and does not mind, with no second chamber between it and the people. The people say they want a representative and active House of Commons. This allegory works out perfectly to the point that Ireland is fuming and fretting at the neglect with which she is treated.

Shall the golfers' House of Lords be mended or

ended? There are three parties in the great state of golf—the old Tories, who want things to remain as they are, and who regard the St. Andrews House of Lords as the finest form of government imaginable, chiefly because it does not govern; the reformers, who want St. Andrews to become more active and to seek the co-operation of some of the leading clubs in the country; and the democratic revolutionaries, who want a new governing body elected by the people and the clubs. The first party is in a hopeless minority, and will always remain so. The present state of affairs may go on for some time yet; but the golf world is too big and important, and the questions pressing upon it are too weighty, for it to be regarded as permanent.

The Royal and Ancient Club of St. Andrews is a most worthy, distinguished, and conscientious institution, full of all the most blue-blooded traditions. One may disagree with the idea that the Club entertains of the duty and responsibility towards the great world of golf which time and circumstances have cast upon it; but no golfer of understanding would speak disrespectfully of this Club, which in many respects is the finest institution of its kind in existence, and is entitled to the very utmost veneration. Chiefly by its efforts there has been given a dignity to the game of golf which has had much to do with its established greatness. Every golfer everywhere owes a debt to the Royal and Ancient Club.

Yet as an authority nobody ever sanctioned it; like Topsy, it simply grew. Of course, it was wanted; somebody had to make laws. It is almost equally certain that the club never aspired to an active command over such an extensive golf world as there is

at present, and that its present disposition is that it "cannot be bothered," that the British golfers must take it as they find it, or—do as they please.

To some extent allied with St. Andrews in the government of the game are the clubs who regulate the championship. To some minds the Royal and Ancient and these other clubs that rule the championships, have sometimes seemed to be in league with each other against the new spirit and new tendencies in golf, and it is not surprising that the worm is turning. The "common people" of the golfing world say that they have had enough of this sort of thing, and all these airs and graces, that they are in the majority—which is perfectly true—and that they will act.

Now what shall be done? Shall the golfers' House of Lords be mended or ended? In course of time some change is inevitable, democracy will have its way, and all those who have the interests of the game most at heart must, on reflection, come to the conclusion that for the time being, at any rate, it will be for good if the House of Lords is reconstituted on slightly more popular lines. Therefore it would seem to be desirable that the Royal and Ancient and its associates, the golfing House of Lords, should recognise the feeling that is undoubtedly abroad in the country, and should take the initiative now, when it would lose nothing in dignity and gain everything in influence, in establishing the government of golf on a firmer and more satisfactory basis than that on which it at present exists. The rules need remodeling, the system of the championships needs re-arranging, the question of county tournaments, standardisation of handicaps, and so forth, call for

some consideration, and the interference of the commercial side of the game needs to be looked into. St. Andrews alone and without a mandate has neither the will nor the power to grapple with all these difficulties. On the other hand, a democratically elected governing body would almost certainly be given far too much to something in the nature of vandalism, and for a certainty golf under its authority would lose much of the dignity that is at present one of its very greatest charms. What one has seen of the ways of even some big provincial clubs, such as might have loud voices in a new democratic government, and the tone that animates their game, gives one no confidence that they would preserve its best traditions intact. There would be a tendency towards unnecessary innovations and vulgarity. Nobody who has any adequate knowledge of the manner and system of golf as practised by the good old-fashioned clubs would care to risk placing the future of the game entirely in the hands of the revolutionaries.

The world of golf is not ready for a great revolution. The fact is that we want as little legislation as possible, but what there is should be good and adequate, and the tendencies and needs of the times should be systematically considered. The best solution to the difficulty, perhaps, would be for St. Andrews to relax a little from its aloofness, recognise that circumstances impose a moral duty upon it, and seek the assistance of a few of the chief clubs, seaside and inland, throughout the country, who among them would form a kind of joint board to which all other clubs would declare their allegiance. We should expect to find such inland

clubs in the south as Sunningdale, Woking, Mid-Surrey, and Walton Heath represented on this board, and it would approach all the questions of the time in a progressive spirit and do its best to remove existing grievances. If the Royal and Ancient took the initiative in this matter, it would gain in dignity and respect, and would have the knowledge that it had done its duty. If no such step is taken, if matters are allowed to drift on as at present, then a revolution of some kind is likely. A point too frequently overlooked in these discussions is, that the Royal and Ancient club is in its membership and constitution very fairly representative of golf throughout the country, as is no other club. The rights of its position at the head of the game are, of course, indisputable.

WINTER

I

WHEN the winds blow and the rains pour down, we discover the true worth of the golfer. The game has no season; it allows no right of control to any weather. It is for all places and for all times, and in the law of the links it is clearly set down that he who is playing by strokes for a prize shall on no account whatsoever delay in the course of his round, nor take any shelter, though Pluvius should pour out upon him from the heavens their entire holding of the most drenching rain. If, in defiance of the stern law of St. Andrews, he does so take shelter, though it be but for a minute under the scanty protection of leafless boughs, he is to be visited with the extreme penalty. Whatever his score, whatever the perfection of his golf, he shall take no prize, his card must be tossed aside as worthless, and he is branded among his fellows as he who was afraid, and as more fitted to putt on the hearthrug by the fireside at home in rivalry with his baby boy or girl, than to take part in this now fierce game of men. What is the law for medal competitions is, in scarcely less measure, the custom and tradition in matches. Once he has begun, the golfer with the great heart must finish his game, and

generally he does so. Scotland sometimes turns up its nose at the English golf of the towns; but round about London, among all its "effete civilisation," there is seen in golf, as in perhaps no other game, that some fine British sporting hearts beat beneath starched linen and silken waistcoats; and it is a thing to think about, that the city man who on 'Change at eleven o'clock in the morning was arrayed most spotlessly and was dealing in his thousands, at three o'clock was driving his little golf ball through wind and blinding rain, drenched to the skin, cold, miserable, despondent with his 8's and 9's, but still doing his duty as a golfer to his game.

So the authorities of St. Andrews will in no case countenance the mere fairweather golfer. He must "face the music." But they do say—they said it when appealed to on one occasion—that the brave player is, after all, entitled to have a hole to putt at, and if the green is under water it is better that there should be no competition. It was the club of St. Duthus that made the appeal, and the experiences of the members of that club on the day concerned were varied and curious. One golfer played his ball on to a "floating green," and after vainly trying to dodge the sphere along the waters into the neighbourhood of the place where the hole was, he picked it out and claimed the right to play again some other day. But when that same day was far spent and the flood had to some extent subsided, another player came along with his card to that green, and, having worked his ball to within three feet of the place where the hole was, he deftly pitched it up into the air with his mashie and down it came on the water immediately covering the hole, sank for a moment, and came up

again floating. Had he holed out? St. Andrews declined to say. They took shelter from this trying problem by observing that that green should not have been played on.

In very similar circumstances a player coaxed his ball to the place where the hole was, and then debated within himself as to how he should hole out. No club that he had would sink the ball, but the law does not prescribe that golf must be played with standard clubs. This resourceful fellow, after due consideration, took his bag from his caddie, held it for a moment above the ball, and then dumped it, end on, down on the floating sphere, sinking it for a second. But was not that a push? And, again, when another man had played on to a floating green he discovered that the wind made a current, and that it—O generous current!—was slowly taking his ball towards the hole. So he waited until it should do so, but it was a slow process, and somebody protested. He claimed that his last stroke was still in progress all the time, and that neither he nor anyone else had any more right to interfere with it than with a ball in flight. However, he was utterly cried down, and his point was not settled.

Thus some curious shots have been played on water; and, have a mind, some great ones too. One of the most classic shots of golf, perhaps the most classic of them all, was that which Fred Tait played in the championship from the water-logged bunker on the far side of the Alps, guarding the seventeenth green at Prestwick. At a moment of crisis he waded in with a forlorn hope, and with a shot that will still be spoken of in a hundred years he saved a point that had seemed gone for ever.

The brave golfer is placed in a difficult position, when his partner is smitten with craven fears of pneumonia and inflammation of the lungs supervening on the soaking that he is getting on the links. What is he to do if in medal competition this fearing one says that he will go no farther, but will hasten back to the clubhouse, with its drying-room and its fire and warm refreshment? The law says that no man shall delay in his round ; but how shall the card be marked if the marker goes off for his dry clothes and hot drinks? Ever generous to the brave, St. Andrews has said that he whose heart is thus willing shall not be disqualified, but shall be permitted to scour the links and the clubhouse in search of a new marker, and if haply in the meantime the storm shall have ceased, good luck to him, and may his be the winning card.

But no false excuses. Did you hear of the historic case of the Bury golfers who appealed to St. Andrews for a ruling after one fateful medal day on their rain-swept course? The storm raged, the winds blew, and the rain drove through the players' garments to the most vulnerable parts of their body. And then one man lost his ball. The other espied a friendly hut and sought shelter there until his unhappy friend should find that which was lost. When it was discovered its owner likewise went to the hut and stayed there for a little while. Why did that golfer seek that hut so? He told St. Andrews that he went there because he had dirtied his face, and his partner had a cloth wherewith it might be wiped! They pleaded for qualification in their competition. "Out upon you for golfers!" said St. Andrews angrily, and so it was decreed.

II

On a frosty day one is apt to damage clubs. The clubmaker does not mind his patrons playing on steely courses. The chances are that one man in a few will need something doing to his shafts or his wooden heads as the result of a day's play. The list of casualties at sunset is considerable, and somewhat reminds one of the early days when a golf club was a much less lasting thing than it is at present. Old golfers are agreed that the breakage of a club by any kind of player is a thing of infinitely rare happening in comparison with what it used to be only a very few years ago. How is this? It cannot be that beginners are any better or more careful than they used to be, and one is very doubtful as to whether the clubs are made any better (although, perhaps, a trifle more elegant), or are endowed with any more strength than they were in the olden days when there were fewer of them to be made, and when so much time was spent upon their individual perfection. Some people think that the socketed shafts that have become firmly established are less reliable than others, and are more likely to give way under severe strain from misuse, and yet how seldom do we really see a wooden club give way at the socket? On the whole there can be no doubt that our modern clubs are thoroughly well made, but that the real cause why we so seldom see breakages is the lighter work that the clubs have to do with the rubber ball than they were set to in the old days of the gutta. In those old days the jar of impact was harder, severer,

harsher, and it sent a shiver through the wrapping of the club that, often repeated, made for an eventual snap. Certainly the decrease in the breakages seems to date exactly from the beginning of the use of the rubber ball.

I have just said that it cannot be that beginners are any better or more careful than they used to be, but this is a statement that needs a trifle of qualification. Your modern beginner has heard from many and diverse authorities of the enormous difficulty of this game, and of the necessity of treating it from the outset with the utmost possible respect; but the neophyte of the olden days was often more of a slapdash, full-blooded fellow, who needed to have two or three strenuous rounds before the spirit in him was fairly broken and he became amenable to the reason of the links. A wonderful story of a wild opening to a golfing career is that of Lord Stormont, when he was initiated at Blackheath some fifty years ago. His lordship had taken too much weight to himself, and Sir William Ferguson, his doctor, being consulted, suggested that he ought to have more exercise, and thought that this might best be administered in the form of golf. Sir William played golf himself, and, like all good doctors, he recommended the game to lazy pale-faced people whenever he thought the occasion opportune. He said to Lord Stormont, "Go down to Blackheath and put yourself in Willie Dunn's hands," Dunn then being professional at this historic course.

Lord Stormont had never seen a golf ball driven in his life, but he took kindly to the idea and repaired to Blackheath. Unfortunately he went there for the first time on a club day, and on this day it was impossible for Dunn to give him his services. But he did as well as he could in the circumstances, and

selected his very best caddie, one Weever, quite a capable teacher, and intrusted him with the onerous duty of teaching the game of golf to Lord Stormont. Dunn sold his lordship a full set of good clubs by way of outfit, and away the two went. When the first round had been played, the round at Blackheath then, as now, consisting of only seven holes, Weever returned alone to the professional's shop, with his pockets full of heads and his arms full of broken shafts. My Lord Stormont had broken every one of his clubs, and had sent his mentor back for a new complete set.

In the second round nearly all of these were broken also; and when, after so many trials and tribulations, Dunn espied the noble beginner returning from the seventh green, he was in some anxious doubt as to how he should best make reference to the events of the day. It was at least encouraging that Lord Stormont was smiling, and so Dunn ventured to observe, "I am very sorry, my lord, that such disasters have befallen you to-day in breaking so many clubs." For answer the new golfer tapped Dunn on the shoulder, and said, "My dear fellow, don't mention it. I feel this game has done me already a great deal of good, and it is going to do me still more. Have another set of clubs ready for me by Thursday. I shall be down then." How many sets of clubs went to the making of the game of Lord Stormont no man knows.

III

Sometimes, in the long and dark evenings, golfers like to play their games in thought by the fireside,

and one may suggest to them a new kind of reflection and study which may prove at the same time interesting and not without educational profit, particularly if such reflections are uttered in company and comparisons of views are made. A golfer has no sooner come by some sort of a working knowledge of the different strokes of the game than he longs for adventures on strange courses, to play at holes that are new and strange to him, and—if it must be—to niblick his way out of bunkers that are more fearful than anything he ever encountered on his mother links. This spirit is in every way commendable, and the experience that results from it is one of the best means of gaining skill and steadiness at the game. Thus it happens that every player of two or three years' practice is acquainted more or less with several different courses in various parts of the country, and it will generally happen that he has the kindest memories of certain holes on each, and that, in fact, there are some of these holes which are his special favourites for their particular length and character. Now if by some impossible grant of nature it were to be ordained that a special course should be made up, consisting of eighteen of his favourite holes, due regard being paid to the proper requirements of a golf course as to variety of length, which eighteen would he select for the purpose, and why? Thoughts on these lines will help him towards an understanding of the points of a good course; for the average player, while he knows a good course when he sees it—or thinks he does—rarely troubles to dissect his general appreciation. Even those players whose game has been almost restricted to play on a few courses in the London or some other district, may entertain them-

selves by piecing up a new and better course than any they know from the materials with which they are supplied in all the holes they have ever played over.

With the idea thus presented, you may go on to making your own ideal course, and that some basis of necessary requirements may be afforded, it may be added that in the opinion of Mr. Harold Hilton such a course should include three short holes, eleven holes requiring two shots to reach the green under ordinary conditions, and four holes which require three shots to reach the green. Mr. Hilton adds that the short holes ought not to be more than 200 yards long, and that in the case of the four very extended holes the minimum of length should be 470 yards. The other holes he thinks should vary from 380 yards to 430 yards. In this connection it is noteworthy that Mr. Hilton's selections are the Redan at North Berwick and the Himalayas at Prestwick for short holes; the Alps and the eighth at Prestwick, the sixth at Hoylake, the second at St. Anne's, and the sixth at Sunningdale for two-shot holes; and the fourteenth at Sandwich, the seventeenth at St. Andrews, and the Cardinal at Prestwick for long holes.

In another part of the world there is something now happening that gives a special point to these fancies. It is nothing less than the attempt, backed up by enormous energy and practically unlimited capital, to make "an ideal course," combining all the best features of the particular holes that it is resolved to copy. A club called the National Golf Club, including among its members many of the best players and many of the richest men in the United States, has been established, and they have taken a big piece of territory on Long Island for the prosecution of

their most ambitious scheme. One of the moving spirits, Mr. Charles B. Macdonald, well known to St. Andrews golfers, and the first American amateur champion, spent a long time in this country about a year or two back, making a most exhaustive study of the best holes on our best courses, and he went home to America with large parcels of most minute plans and photographs. The land chosen on Long Island is a fine piece of country for golf, and this is going to be—is being—so pulled about, built up, and given the general appearance of having been acted upon by several earthquakes, to the end that the best possible copies of these holes shall be made. Although anything in the nature of an exact copy is manifestly impossible in a large proportion of cases, despite all the powers of money and energy, it is declared that at least the underlying principles which account for the superlative excellence of the holes chosen as models shall be faithfully and accurately represented. It is prophesied that on these two hundred acres of land which have been bought at Peconic Bay, there will be combined in one eighteen-hole round the best features of the most celebrated courses in the world; in other words, "a course that shall be the best in the world." This is a vast ambition, and one which only Americans would find it easy to entertain.

Let me mention what conditions Mr. Macdonald made for the selection of these eighteen holes. He decreed that there should be two short holes for iron shots, between 130 and 160 yards in length; two 500-yard holes; two of the "drive and pitch" order, 300 to 320 yards; eight good two-shot holes, 350 to 470 yards; and four long one-shot holes varying from 190 to 250 yards, according to the contour of

the ground, the longer holes having the fair green falling towards the putting green. These together would make up a course of about 6000 yards in length.

IV

Once a year there is a great foursome played between a Colonel and a Parson on the one side and an Author and an M.P. on the other, and they always look forward to it with great keenness. It is a compact among them that the match shall be played every year that all four are alive and within the United Kingdom. This is one of the most delightful kinds of matches, and no pleasure of reminiscence is so rich as that of golfers such as these in looking back over ten or twenty years of matches and comparing their recollections of them. All earnest golfers should have some arrangement of the kind with their best friends.

It happened the other morning when this match was to be played, that a great disappointment was in store for the little party, as they took train from Charing Cross bound for that fine inland course some twenty miles away to which they were all most devoted. Heavy clouds of ominous complexion were above at nine o'clock, and there was a suspicious look and feel about the atmosphere; but, like all good golfers, these men were optimists all, and would not mention to one another the fear that was in their hearts.

"I daresay we shall have a very nice day after all," murmured the Parson, and the Colonel stated that he was nearly certain that the glass was rising when

he last looked at it. A fine fellow is your golfing optimist. But when London had been left some ten miles behind, the hideous truth was exposed beyond any denial. It was snowing, and the chill of it went to the hearts of the golfers.

"Oh, this won't be much," said the M.P., "and it is certain to melt quickly, anyhow; see how watery are the flakes."

But when they arrived at the course it was snowing more than ever, and big dry flakes were whirling in eddies all about, while the course already lay an inch beneath a white covering. It was a bad case. Unless there was a great change in an hour or so there could be no golf that day, and indeed the idea of it was already almost given up. The four sat in the smoke-room looking exceeding glum. Attempts to make congenial conversation failed. The Parson felt that it was incumbent on him to cheer up his friends, and after other kind efforts he bethought himself of what he considered to be an excellent story.

"Upon my word, you fellows," he said, "I nearly forgot to tell you of the most extraordinary occurrence that I have ever heard of, and one in which a strange point of golfing law is involved. The case must be sent to St. Andrews."

Everybody was alert at this announcement. It is an excellent thing to know that a poser of sorts is going to be put to that autocratic assembly in Fifeshire.

"Splendid!" ejaculated the Colonel, "we must hear this story of yours, Septimus; but I hope you are not going to pitch us that yarn you once told me about your wife's brother having once played a low push shot across a river, and a salmon leaping at the

ball as it skimmed across and being carried with it on to the bank! We have heard that, you know."

"As I told you at the time," responded the Parson, "I only repeated what my wife's brother told me, and I certainly did not say that I had seen the fish dragged on to the bank in that manner. But this story was told me by my son Richard, when he was down from Oxford last time, and he declares the incident happened on the course at Radley. One of the men was engaged in a match, and going to the tenth he played a beautiful run up from forty yards off the putting green, that actually made the ball hit the pin and then it rolled into the hole; but it had no sooner got into the hole than out it flew again, and after it came a large frog! It was clear that the ball had rolled on the back of the frog in the hole, and that this frog, startled, no doubt, jumped up and out of the hole, ejecting the ball at the same time. The ball came to rest on the green, and my son's friend thereupon claimed that he had holed out."

For a few seconds there was a stony silence, and then the Colonel burst out with a loud guffaw.

"My dear old boy," he exclaimed, "I am sure that you will find that story, or one very like it, in the Old Testament somewhere if you look sufficiently. It is as old as the hills! You really should not tell us these things. You know what the American did when he was told that story? He put a recommendation in the suggestion book that the club should urge upon the St. Andrews authorities that they should make an addition to the rules to something like this effect:

"If any frog, toad, snake, or other reptile, or a mouse,

rat, weasel, mole, gopher, or other vermin (or in the case of casual water, a pike, pickerel, perch, pompano, or other fish) be in or near the hole, its presence being established to the satisfaction of two independent witnesses, such reptile, vermin, or fish must be removed before the next stroke is played, under penalty of the loss of the hole. Should a player unwittingly play at the hole when such reptile, vermin, or fish is in it, its presence being subsequently attested by the aforesaid independent witnesses, and such reptile, vermin, or fish either hinder the ball from entering the hole or eject it therefrom, the ball shall nevertheless be considered to have been duly holed, and no penalty shall be incurred.'

"Still," went on the Colonel, after this little pleasantry, "you have given us a most excellent idea, Septimus. Now let each one of us think awhile, and let us see who can present to our little company the stiffest poser in golf law. Each of us, I suggest, shall be allowed to look at the rules for the space of ten minutes, no more and no less, and shall then have ten more minutes for consideration of his problem. What do you say, boys?"

All agreed that the idea was a most excellent one for the purpose of killing time and gathering knowledge about the rules. It was decided that the company should vote, if necessary, on the answers, and that while the Parson should be at liberty to choose his own position in the recital in virtue of what he had done already, the others should draw lots. The reverend gentleman decided that he would go last, and, on lots being drawn, the Colonel was settled to present the first problem, the Author the second, and the M.P. the third. When the twenty

minutes had expired the four assembled at the table, and the Colonel was called upon to present his queer case. It was suggested to him that he should make it look as real as possible.

He submitted it as follows :

"Here is a nice point, which I think an Imperial Conference might be called upon to determine. General Botha, let us say, has a little dog, which takes some intelligent interest in the game of golf, as do many other dogs. He goes out to play a match with Dr. Jameson, and despite all rule and custom, 'Bobs,' as the little dog is called, is permitted to accompany them. When approaching the fourth hole the Doctor plays a lovely wrist shot with his iron which sends the ball on to the green, trickling close up to the pin. In one of his frisky moments that wretched dog scampers after it, picks it up in his mouth before it (the ball) had stopped running, and then begins playing about with it. The dog drops the ball on to the green two or three times, paws at it and plays with it, and then, seemingly struck by an inspiration, rolls it into the hole. 'By Jove! That's my hole, then, Botha!' exclaims the Doctor, although the General has laid his ball dead with his mashie with the like. 'How do you make that out? Let us be fair, now that we are such good friends,' says Botha. 'Most certainly,' replies the Doctor, 'but you must see that as the ball went into the hole from that last shot of mine I holed from that shot. Of course it was a pity that your dog got up to his tricks, but he is an outside agency, and I don't see that it makes any difference to the result.' Botha thinks awhile. Then he asks, 'Did you watch "Bobs" closely while he had the ball?' Dr. Jameson assented.

'Then,' Botha says, 'there may be one circumstance in which you do not win that hole, my friend, and when we go to England we will discuss it with the authorities.' Now what was passing through Botha's mind, and is his point a good one anyway?"

"Excellent for you, Colonel," said the M.P. after a moment's pause. "Now, gentlemen, what must we do with Botha, for it is clear that we are the authority to whom he refers. But then we have a right to know what it was that Botha had in his mind at the finish of his little argument with Dr. Jim. You will tell us that, Colonel?"

"Botha urges that he saw 'Bobs' let the ball come to rest when pawing it about."

"And what does Jameson say to that?" inquired the Author.

"Oh, Jameson does not deny it. He says that he did not see it, but he thinks it very probable, and he will certainly yield that point if it is material, as he desires that the case should be settled strictly on its merits, neither side taking any unfair advantage of the other."

"It is a pity that they could not settle it on terms of equity," said the Parson.

"I don't agree that equity has anything to do with the case," observed the Colonel at length. "It seems to me that Botha's point settles it, and that the ball must be played from the place where the dog allowed it to come to rest. I don't think Dr. Jim wins the hole at all. Rule 22 governs the case partly but not entirely. By the way, Septimus, when we turn up rules to settle these cases, I think you should only look at those affecting the one in hand, and not at

other rules which have a bearing on the case you are to present. You have had your ten minutes' study, you know. Now it is clear that the ball was in motion when the dog seized it, and if the dog then took it direct to the hole it all counted in the stroke. This case does not come within the clause about the ball lodging in anything moving, because the dog was not moving when it seized the ball. Once the dog let the ball stop on the green the stroke was ended. Therefore it is evidently a question as to whether it allowed it to come to rest or not, and Botha's evidence settles the matter. What do you say, William?"

"I entirely agree," responded the M.P.

"And you, Jim?"

"I agree," said the Author.

"I trust we can count on your support, Septimus?" said the Colonel, looking across towards the Parson.

"Oh, certainly," he replied.

"Gentlemen," said the Colonel in his most official manner, "it is determined that Dr. Jameson did not hole out with that stroke. I am informed that they putted out afterwards, each in one more, and therefore the hole was halved. Now, my literary friend, will you kindly present your case?"

The Author thereupon advanced his queer case as follows:

"A very awkward point has arisen in the course of play on the links at Valhalla. Shakespeare and Bacon, who are staying there at the present time, got up very early one morning, when the other golfers were asleep, and went out for a match, without caddies. Going to the seventh hole, which is

both a short one and a blind one—a thoroughly bad hole—the players were not aware that the greenkeeper was on the putting-green cutting a new hole. They played their tee shots and then went forward to the green, when they were surprised to find that the ball of each lay dead to a different hole. The greenkeeper had taken the flag and the metal lining out of the old hole, and had cut the slab of turf out of the new one, but had not at that time placed the metal cup or the flag into the new one, nor put the turf into the old one to fill it up. Bacon's ball lay dead to the new hole, and Shakespeare's to the old one. Each insisted on holing out at the hole to which his ball lay dead (the holes were many yards apart), and then the dispute began, each claiming the hole. Shakespeare said that as the new hole was not finished the old one was still in commission. 'No,' said Bacon, 'not satisfied with cheating me out of my plays, you now try to take my holes. We have evidently been playing at new holes all the way out so far, and we must continue to do so. It is the new holes that count.' 'But,' expostulated Shakespeare, 'there are more old holes on the course at the present time than new ones. And this wretched greenkeeper will take two hours to finish his job. Must we dawdle behind him the whole way round? Let us ask the greenkeeper which hole was most like a hole at the time the balls came on to the green.' The greenkeeper, however, was very ill-tempered, having been nearly hit by one of the balls, and he declined to answer the question. He said that people had no business to be playing on the course while holes were being cut, *no matter who they were*. Eventually the parties gave up their match and went

back to the clubhouse, when they agreed to submit the point to some carefully constituted authority that would do its best to settle this most unfortunate and undignified quarrel between two eminently respectable persons of considerable standing."

The Author looked about him after this deliverance.

"H'm!" muttered the Colonel, "not bad for you, Jim."

"It seems to me," said the Reverend Septimus, "that Bacon certainly won if the new hole was full size, despite its not having had the tin put into it."

"Oh yes, it was full size," interposed the Author.

"The old hole," pursued the Parson, "was ground under repair, but if the new hole was not full size Shakespeare won."

"Of course," remarked the Author, "the tin is only mentioned to indicate the state of transition."

"I don't agree with Septimus," said the M.P. "The rules do not provide for this contingency, and it must be settled under the equity clause of Rule 36. Regarding it in this way, it seems exactly six of one and half a dozen of the other, and the best—indeed, the only thing—to do is to regard the green as under repair, and the hole as temporarily closed. Shakespeare and Bacon should therefore call it a half and pass on. If they had seen the flag before playing their tee shots it might have made a difference."

"I am in entire accord with you, William," the Colonel declared.

"Ditto," said the Author. "That was the ruling I had in my mind."

"I think we ought to have another opinion,"

persisted the Parson, "but for the present I desire to go with the majority."

"Now let us hear the character of the problem that our friend the hon. member for North-East Fife has to present to this tribunal," said the Colonel, with an expectant look to the quarter indicated.

"My case is a somewhat singular one, gentlemen," the M.P. responded. "It is this:

"A public road leading to the clubhouse crosses the line to the second hole, and when John Smith and Isaac Rosenstein were playing this hole it happened that Isaac's bad slice landed his ball under the back seat of a motor-car standing still in the road, said car, curiously enough, being the new one which Rosenstein himself has bought this season, and which, it is suggested, he likes to "show off" with. Seeing where the ball had gone to, and having the price of ten balls on the match, a thought passed through his mind. Hailing the chauffeur in the car, he exclaimed, 'You mitherable vellow! Did I not tell you to geep that car in the garage at the back of the clubhouse, where it vould not be damaged. Be off vith you this very instant, or I vill sack you! Quick!' And before John Smith could speak the chauffeur was doing his forty miles an hour back to the clubhouse—with the ball still in the car. Smith and Rosenstein then wrangled for hours, the latter being greatly astonished because his opponent objected to his dropping a ball, and that without penalty, at the spot where he played his last stroke. The points presented for argument are these: (1) Shall Rosenstein drop without losing a stroke? (2) Shall he drop and lose stroke and distance? (3) Shall he not drop at all, but lose the hole?

(4) Shall he play the ball from where it lies under the seat of the motor-car in the club garage, as, if he loses on the first two counts, he wants to do?

(5) What ought to have been done?"

"I trust that your friend Rosenstein will not offer himself as a candidate for membership of this club," observed the Colonel with a smile, "because you might tell him if he thinks of doing so that I have heard of this incident, and I happen to be on the committee."

"He is no friend of mine," said the M.P.

"Well then, gentlemen," the man of arms demanded, "what is your pleasure that we should do in the *affaire* Rosenstein?"

"I don't think there is very much doubt about that," observed the Parson. "We must be unanimous in this matter. I think we may safely leave it to you, Colonel, to make the award."

The M.P. and the Author assented, but it was understood that the former should have the privilege of sending the case back for re-trial if he disagreed.

"Then, gentlemen," said the Colonel, "I give judgment as follows:

"Rosenstein loses the hole. It was his duty to have played the ball from the place where it lodged in the car, and there is a strong suspicion that he knew it! He is not entitled to regard the car as an agency outside the match, since he controlled the car and ordered it away. By his own act he made it impossible for him to obey the rules. He loses under Rule 7, and it may be mentioned that the Rules of Golf Committee has already decided that a ball played into a motor-car must be played out of it, or the hole

given up. Clearly the ball lying in the car in the club garage does not lie where it did before."

"I quite agree," said the M.P.

"But should not something be done with Rosenstein?" the Parson asked.

"That is for his own committee to determine," the Colonel replied. "We have no jurisdiction. And now, Septimus, I am sure that the tit-bit of this sitting of the court will be submitted by you. We are anticipating that. I beg to move that if your case is not so pointed and interesting as those already presented, you shall be condemned to give such an order to the steward as will do something to stifle our disappointment, and take the chill from our blood on this wretched day. What do you think, my colleagues?"

"It is an excellent and a most proper idea," the Author said, and the M.P. concurred.

"As you will," the clergyman assented. "Now the little problem that has arisen in my mind runs this way:—

"Dives said to Lazarus, 'These are days of charity, my poor friend, but the cases must be deserving. The par of this course is 74. If you can get round in 68 I will give you one twentieth of what I have got.' Lazarus wept tears of gratitude, and forthwith began to take lessons and to practise exceedingly, three rounds a day, for his handicap was 24. And years passed by and he did not go round even in par; but one day, having great luck, a sensation was caused about the links, and the word was passed about that old Lazarus had got a 4 at the last hole to do 68. And he had. But he took 3 to get on the green, and then had a 10-yard putt for the 4 and

68, which was not an easy matter, particularly as the putt was downhill and there was a big slope from the left as well. Dives was watching and he smiled, but Lazarus was in sore trouble. Then he bethought himself of an idea, and he placed a ball to the left of his own and he tried to putt it to a point exactly a foot to the left of the hole. First he found that he borrowed too much, and then too little, and next that he was too strong, but eventually he got it right exactly, and his ball just got to a foot to the left of the hole. 'Now, I know,' he said, and then he putted his proper ball, and with great confidence, and it went into the hole! Whereupon Dives was much wroth, and said, 'Surely I will not give you a twentieth of what I have got, for you have offended against the law and the spirit of the game, and you did not go round in 68, but are disqualified.' Lazarus said, 'Master, I have not offended against the law of the game, and as for the spirit thereof I care not, for having gained the twentieth of what you have got I shall never play it more.' And when they heard what Lazarus said they were amazed, and they said they must have some proper judgment upon it. Does Lazarus come into his fortune after finding the line and strength of his putt in that fashion?"

The Parson seemed pleased with himself when he had finished his statement.

"I believe the beggar's got off — Septimus, I mean!" the M.P. ejaculated.

"I am sure he has," agreed the Colonel.

"Now, you see," put in the Author, "the wretched Lazarus did not tamper with the line of the putt. He practised along what was to all intents and

purposes that line; but it was not the line, or else he might have been caught. He placed no mark and drew no line."

"That is so," muttered the Colonel thoughtfully.

"He clearly offended against the spirit of the game," the M.P. observed. "You or I would not have done such a thing in any circumstances, eh, Colonel?"

"Of course not," the Colonel replied, "but it has to be remembered that this was really almost a matter of life and death to the old man, and in such a case he was perhaps not to be blamed for sticking to the strict letter of the law. From our point of view the spirit is above the law; but when it comes to a case of this kind, with goodness knows how many thousands at stake, a merciless fellow on the other side who is himself inclined to stick to the law exactly, and when Lazarus, as he says, intends to have done with the game, why I am not sure that from his point of view—his, mind you—he is to be condemned for throwing the spirit overboard. His opponent would do so—in fact, to all intents and purposes he does. This has become a strictly business transaction. The question is, did he break the law?"

"You remember the Rules Committee's decision in the famous Selkirk case in 1906?" the M.P. asked. "It showed the Committee's very proper anxiety to preserve the true spirit even to the extent of straining the interpretation of the rule about touching the line of the putt. I believe some of them privately admitted that they were conscious of straining it; but they were doing so in a very good cause, and to my mind they were to be applauded rather than blamed. In this case a foursome was being played, and while one man was preparing to putt, his

partner stood two yards beyond the hole on the other side, and from there pointed out the line of the putt, incidentally letting his putter rest on the turf to do so—two yards beyond the hole. The opponents claimed the hole on the ground that the line of the putt had been touched, meaning that the line from the ball to the hole, continued beyond the hole, was still the line of the putt. The case was sent to St. Andrews, and the Rules Committee upheld the claim and gave the hole to the opponents—a remarkable decision!”

“H’m!” the Colonel grunted. “Of course, give some golfers an inch and they will take a yard; and supposing the putter had been laid on that line only two inches beyond the hole, the green had been very keen, and had sloped down to the hole from the back side. If the ball had got to the point where the putter had rested it might conceivably have rolled back into the hole. There would be splendid justification for the Rules Committee in a case of that kind, and it would prove the wisdom of the Selkirk decision. Of course every day of our lives we see golfers, when studying their putts from the back side of the hole, allowing their putters to rest on the green in the continuation of the line. However, Lazarus seems to have been quite clear of any decision of this kind. By no stretch of imagination can you call a line which is a foot to one side of the real line, although parallel to it, ‘the line of the putt.’”

“The Americans have been tinkering with a proposed new set of rules,” the Author said, “and one of their suggested rules prohibits a practice swing anywhere except on the tee. That would govern this case.”

"Ah yes, but what about our own code?" the Colonel said.

"The practice stroke is not forbidden," the M.P. observed after careful reference to the rules, "but I remember that on one occasion a very similar point was submitted to the Rules Committee, and they said that such a thing was so obviously contrary to the spirit of the game that they had not thought it necessary to legislate upon the point. And they have not done so, and"—

"That is so, and they were quite right," the Colonel interrupted hurriedly, "because this is golf, and we cannot have rules in our code to say that men must not cheat, and the penalties for doing so. It would be too much of a reflection on us as gentlemen and golfers. But here is a most exceptional case, where advantage is taken of the omission, and Lazarus appeals to the law and the law only. He will stand by the law—the strict letter of it."

"I believe he must have his money," the Author said.

"It is the law," said the M.P.

"I think so," put in the Parson.

"Then, Septimus," the Colonel concluded, "will you kindly tell your friend Lazarus that he may send a chartered accountant round to Dives' headquarters to examine his financial position, with a view to a proper apportionment of his estate on the basis of nineteen parts to Dives and one part to Lazarus? And you had better tell the new record-holder at the same time that we don't like this sort of thing, and we expect him to keep to his statement that he will not play the game again. He will have the fever on him after that 68, and with a few thousands a year at

his disposal he will be after getting into all the clubs. I know these renunciations of golf. I have renounced myself—hundreds of times!”

At this moment the door opened and the steward entered to say that luncheon was ready. “Splendid!” exclaimed the Colonel. “Gentlemen, the court is closed!”

V

Golf remained impossible in the afternoon, and the M.P. filled up his time by working out some golf statistics with a view to indicating to the ignorant public what was comprised in a year of golf.

“You see,” he said, “sooner or later some of the very high authorities will find it to be necessary to take very serious notice of this game, of the number of people whose time it claims, of the land it engages, of the capital sunk in it, and of the enormous current expenditure upon it. Golf has really become a considerable factor in the social scheme of this country, and this must be recognised by legislators. I see that the Union authorities at Wirral have been giving some attention to the matter, with the result that they have jumped on the Royal Liverpool Club with an enormously increased assessment. The process of milking the golfer will begin soon.”

“Well,” said the Colonel indulgently, “if our little game is to become a matter of national importance, you will be having questions asked about it in the House before long; eh, William?”

“It is odd that you should make that suggestion,” the Parliamentarian responded, as he began to rummage in the inside pocket of his coat, “because

I have a rather curious document here which amplifies it somewhat. Let me see—I am sure I had it in my letter-case—well, well!—Ah yes, here it is! I was going to say that one of the keenest golf youngsters we have got in this Parliament is young Norris, whose constant object in life seems to be to pair off with one of the Opposition down to Sunningdale. I believe he would rather win the Parliamentary Handicap next year than get a small Government job. Well, in the House he is always filling up his spare time with the development of some golfing idea or other. The other night there was quite an angry discussion between him and another of his kidney upon the question as to whether, if a ball were teed alongside the Beaconsfield statue, a Massey or a Braid could loft it over the Houses of Parliament and into the river, and eventually the pair of them went out to see what sort of a shot it really would be. The next night, when somebody whispered to him that there would be a lot more sense in discussing a Bill for the Regulation of the Rubber Core than the measure that just then was occupying the attention of the House, he got out some paper and concocted what he called a ‘Forecast of a Report of the Parliamentary Proceedings in 1950,’ and that is what I have got here. Just listen to this for question time:

“‘HOUSE OF COMMONS—*Thursday*

“‘The Speaker took the chair at 3.5.

“‘UNREST IN MOROCCO

“‘In answer to Mr. R. Kore (+1), the SECRETARY

OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS stated that no more rubber-cored balls would be shipped to Morocco until some kind of guarantee had been given by the Maghzen that British golfers would be treated with respect and every consideration extended to them in the pursuit of their game. Latest advices were to the effect that parties of Moors had constantly collected round the ninth green at Tangier and the third at Mogador and had made faces at the players while they were putting, causing them the most intense annoyance and completely ruining their play. His Majesty's ships *Baffy* and *Niblick* had been instructed to proceed to Mogador without delay, and left Gibraltar on Friday. (Loud cheers from both Government and Opposition benches.)

“MR. A. GUTTA (10): Is it a fact that Germany has encouraged the Moors in these acts of rebellion? (Loud cries of “Order.”)

“THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS: The hon. member must perceive that public considerations make it undesirable that any answer should be given to his question.

“MR. WILL LABOR (40): Will the right hon. gentleman inform the House what are the handicaps of the British officials at present in Morocco, and will he state whether in his opinion the rebellious attitude of the Moors has been caused to some extent by the inferior playing capacity of these servants, which has been such as to excite the derision of the native population? (Loud cries of “Order” and “Withdraw.”)

“THE SPEAKER: The hon. member must not cast aspersions on the handicaps of the public servants of His Majesty's Government.

“MR. LABOR: I could give them all a stroke a hole! (“Oh, oh.”)

“THE SPEAKER: I must ask the hon. member not to persist in these reflections on the playing quality of the Government servants in Morocco, and to withdraw what he has already said.

“MR. LABOR: I withdraw. No doubt they are all Vardons. (“Order, order.”)

“THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS: It may interest the hon. gentleman the member for Woolwich, to know that a cable received at the Foreign Office this morning stated that the British Consul at Mogador had just holed out with a mashie shot. (Loud and prolonged cheering.)

“GREAT BRITAIN AND RUSSIA

“In answer to Mr. T. Box (+ 4), the PRIME MINISTER (+ 7) said that there was no development to report in the negotiations which were at present proceeding with the Government of Russia. The British Government had suggested that under clause 563B of the Hague Convention the differences existing between the two Governments should be decided by one professional foursome, but Russia had replied that this suggestion was obviously unfair, unless the British Government gave an undertaking not to select Taylor and Braid as their representatives. In the absence of a friendly understanding on such lines as these, there would be nothing for it but for the British Government to pour golfers into Russia with a view to winning all their monthly medals and cups, and with such a possibility in view detachments of our best players had been mobilised and were now

doing two practice rounds a day at Sandwich and Prestwick. The transports *Stymie* and *Bunker* were in readiness, each stored with ten thousand boxes of the best balls. (Loud Government and Opposition cheers.)

"THE BOOM IN THE BALL TRADE

"MR. R. TISAN (20) asked whether it was true that the ballmakers of Glasgow had been working twenty-four hours a day for the last six weeks, and in some cases more.

"THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (scratch): In no case have these ballmakers been working more than twenty-three hours a day, and they have been paid at the full twenty-four rate, and are quite satisfied. If Great Britain did not make and sell the balls, America would.

"MR. R. TISAN: But they have no time left for play.

"THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: They play nine holes in the dinner hour instead of utilising it in the customary manner. ("Hear, hear.")

"NO STYMIES

"In answer to Mr. Foozleum (42), the MINISTER OF EDUCATION (2) stated that it was not true that the children in the schools at Hoylake and Westward Ho! were being taught to play no stymies, or that they were systematically encouraged to play the score game to the neglect of true match play. What had happened was simply this, that there had been complaints that the last lot of mashies that had been received from Taylor and Forgan had not sufficient

loft for very young players, and that all attempts to loft over stymies with them had failed, though the senior players experienced no such difficulties. In the circumstances the teachers, acting under authority of the Board of Education, had thought it best to suspend stymies until more mashies came to hand. As to score play, the simple fact was that one or two of the senior students were going in for the Open Championship, and had been doing a little practising in view of it. It might interest the House to know that one of them, Smith by name, had done a round of 75 at Hoylake with a wind blowing straight upwards from the turf. This was a splendid performance, and showed the efficacy of the new Education Act which the Government brought into force last year, which made the use of the *Complete Golfer* compulsory in all elementary schools. (Loud Ministerial cheers.)

““BILLS

““The Bogey Amendment Bill was read a third time and passed.

““The Women's Handicaps Bill was read a first time.

““CHAMPIONSHIP COURSES

““The House then went into Committee on the Championship Courses Bill.

““MR. JOHN BLUMOND (scratch) asked how much longer the just claims of Ireland were to be ignored. Irish golfers were in such a state of irritation, due to the way in which they were neglected, that it was impossible for them to settle down to the improvement of their game, with the result that Irish driving

was never so bad as at present, and his suffering compatriots could not putt for nuts or potatoes.

[LEFT SITTING].’”

“Rather good,” commented the Author at the end of this recital. “Wasn’t it that young Norris who circulated the jest that if he could play his mashie pitches properly he would be down to scratch and in the running for a small kind of office, and that if he could get to plus 7 he would be the President of the British Republic?”

“That’s the man,” the M.P. answered. “Very nice sort of chap, too. We must bring him down here one day. Richardson took him down to Rye for a week-end once, but had to go back to town again without him at the end of a whole week.”

“Ha!” said the Colonel, “but that’s nothing in comparison with the true story of the non-golfer who went to Sandwich for a week-end nine years ago, and at the invitation of his friend experimented with the game, and has been down there ever since, playing it!”

“Good man!” exclaimed the Author.

“But what about these statistics, William?” the Colonel inquired.

“Well,” said the M.P., “I have calculated that at the present time there are over a million acres under golf in Great Britain, and that a sum-total of about £4,700,000 a year is now spent on the game in this country. But you get the queerest results when you come to consider the balls that are used in a year, and what happens to them.”

“Proceed,” said the Colonel.

VI

"Now, just consider the ball," the M.P. responded. "Pretty little pimpled thing, isn't it? Stuffed full of delight! Full of promise for at least two hours' fine health-giving enjoyment! We used to think a half-pound tin of our favourite tobacco was the most heartening sight to see; but a box of new balls has it now. One ball is such a tiny little thing. You can hold sixteen of them in one hand! I have seen a man hold eighteen, and possibly that is the record. Giving a ball four rounds of life, two men could play together morning and afternoon for more than a fortnight with the balls that are held in this hand. But just see how many are needed by the great world of golf!

"To begin with, there are said to be 300,000 golfers in this country. It has been reckoned that at the height of the summer golfing season, when the players are busy everywhere, not less than 500,000 balls are used up every week. This, indeed, seems to be a most reasonable estimate—less than two balls per man per week, with an enormous percentage of players out on the links four or five days a week. It was semi-officially stated last June that one firm of makers, and that not by any means the biggest, was working night and day, and turning out 100,000 balls a week. Decidedly half a million is well within the mark. Taking the whole year round, if you say one ball per golfer per week, that is surely a very modest reckoning. It is practically a certainty that it is an underestimate. At that rate we have a grand total of

15,000,000 balls used up every year by the British golfers on British links. Fifteen millions!"

"Good gracious!" the Parson exclaimed. "One would hardly believe it!"

"Yes, let us see what we can do with these 15,000,000 besides play 6,000,000,000 shots with them, which is what may be done, allowing four rounds to each ball and a hundred strokes to each round, and what with foozlers, women, and children, you will find that a hundred is a very fair average, even if it is only the medal-winning score of the 20-handicap man.

"Seven balls go to the lineal foot, and thus there are forty-nine of them in the square foot. It seems hard to believe that all the balls of a year could, if packed nicely together after the fashion of eggs, be laid out in a fair-sized field of seven acres. But stay! I can give you some fancy idea of what this annual ball crop really means after all. There are seven to the foot—in one little lineal foot you have sufficient balls to last a careful week-end player for a couple of months. Now, bring out the army of caddies that there are in the country and set them to work teeing the balls up right against and touching each other in a line, beginning with the first at Charing Cross, or, to be more appropriate, on the Mid-Surrey course at Richmond. Then proceed northwards. There will still be a few balls left in the pockets of the caddies when they have continued that long line of one year's balls right away through Rugby, Stafford, Carlisle, and over the Border range to Edinburgh, and on to the Braid Hills course. We can join the premier courses of two capitals with the balls of one year, for the line we make is 405 miles long, and at 11s. or 12s. a

foot it would be considerably more expensive than the ordinary permanent way. It is a wonderful line. Nine yards of it will last a busy golfer a whole year, and he need never be reproached for putting down a dirty ball."

The Hon. Member for North-East Fife was fairly warmed to his theme by this, and he pursued enthusiastically: "There is some food for reflection in the incidental mention that I have just made that the British golfers play 6,000,000,000 shots every year. *Puck* boasted some time ago that he could 'put a girdle round about the earth in forty minutes.' It might surprise this sprite to know that the British golfers could do the job in ten minutes, which is the time we might give them to drive a dozen balls each from the tee. If those were fair drives, and were put end to end, they would easily go round the world, with a little to spare. Evidently, then, the British golfers go the distance of the circumference of the world many times over in the course of the year. You may take it that the average player, what with going off the line, waddling about on the putting greens, walking from green to tee, and so on, does a tramp of four miles in every round of eighteen holes that he makes. At four rounds a week, that is sixteen miles a week, or eight hundred in the golfing year of fifty weeks, a fortnight's holiday for illness, dissipation, and foreign travel, being allowed in all these annual calculations. So our 300,000 British golfers in the course of the year walk and tool their balls for a matter of 240,000,000 miles. Most of this abundant exercise would not be taken if there were no golf.

"This 240,000,000 of miles means that if the British

golfers had a links round the middle of the earth they would collectively play 60,000 times round it in the course of the year. They would be almost jostling and continually driving into each other. There would be a shriek of 'Fore!' from the Gulf of Guinea to Borneo, and it would be wailed across the wide Pacific. It would prevent overcrowding and blocking at the short holes if a course were laid out to the sun and back, and the British golfers were started off at five minutes intervals. It would be nearly 93,000,000 miles to the turn, and the same back, and if the British golfers then did a short round to Venus and home again, putting on another 50,000,000, they would nearly have done their usual year's golf.

"But this little glimpse into the fairyland of golf," said the Hon. Member in a tone of conclusion, has all come about through the contemplation of that simple-looking pimply little ball, and it is time we wound up our consideration of it. It has been said that there are 15,000,000 used in Britain in the year. Suppose the average cost is. 1s. 6d., which it probably is. That means that the nice little sum of £1,125,000 is spent by the British golfer in the course of the year in golf balls."

"Prodigious!" exclaimed the Parson.

"Well, I don't know what you think, William," put in the Colonel, "but my recommendation is that all facts which indicate the extensiveness of this game, and the enthusiasm of its followers, such as some of those you have quoted, had better be kept to ourselves. On one day in April we shall be having a Chancellor of the Exchequer coming along with a fine scheme for paying the National Debt off by means of golf. And now, boys, we'd better be off.

Next Thursday, we said, didn't we? And it's to be red balls then, if necessary!"

VII

When the short days, wet and cold, come on, some golfers speak of the virtues of close seasons for games. There never can be any regularly ordained close season in golf; such is neither needed nor desired. But now and then some men will try the imposition of such a season on themselves.

They oil and put away their clubs, give away their stock of balls, put everything connected with golf away into the box-room, and settle down to a course of winter reading, study, and attention to those domestic and social matters which have for so long been sadly neglected. All goes well for a week, and then they think there will be no harm in getting out an aluminium putter and practising on the hearthrug for five minutes or so in the evening. This is found to be a wonderfully interesting occupation, and presently they unstore the mashie or well-lofted iron in order to practise negotiating stymies—a form of practice which cannot fail to be useful in the forthcoming season. Ten days later they ask themselves what is the use of being strong-minded and miserable, they ring up somebody on the telephone, and they catch the next train down to the course.

In the majority of cases the particular way in which the cold affects the members of the close-season party and crabs their shots, is in reducing their wrists and hands to a state of numbness in which it is certainly difficult for anybody to play the game as it ought to

be played. Such people may be recommended to adopt a very simple device, which is in favour among the best and sturdiest players, namely, that of wearing knitted cuffs or mittens over those wrists and coming some way up on the hands. Mr. Hilton carries this idea to the extent of wearing a special kind of thick, warm cuffs made of fur, and the effect is to keep warm those important and much exposed veins in the wrists which feed the hands with blood. The difference is wonderful; but if it is still insufficient to enable the man to do what he considers justice to his game, and if he is still miserable, there is no harm in his imposing a close season upon himself. But he must not talk like the fox who lost his tail, and try to induce others to stop the game as well. It is no use pretending that the game generally would be any the better for it.

But let us take the question as to whether a man's golf, supposing it is normally good golf, ever can be any better for a more or less lengthy stoppage, and upon it I have taken the opinions of several different authorities, with the result that, though they do not all agree, there is a strong balance in favour of keeping your golf going all the time if you want to improve or even maintain it at its best standard. You will generally find that it is only the amateurs who ever get really stale. The professionals rarely do. Mr. Horace Hutchinson is apparently one of those who do not believe in giving up one's golf for any length of time. He thinks the results are generally disastrous, and he tells how on one occasion in his earlier days, when he was reading for the Bar, he did not look at a golf club for some months, with the result that when he resumed the game he found that he had forgotten a

great deal of it, had to relearn it, and found even then that it was not the same good game that he had been bred up with. He now counsels all who are going anywhere for a long holiday or anything of that kind, on no account to go near a place where there is no golf course, for the result will be that life will never be the same again as regards its golf. "You never play again," he says, "with the same confidence, the same fearlessness, the same certainty that you can control the ball and make it do what you tell it to do. You may make something of the game afterwards, but I am sure that you will lose immensely. You do not play in the same instinctive way as before." Men like Braid and Vardon would not say "Thank you" for a month's holiday in which they could not play golf regularly, despite the fact that they are always playing. One recent winter Harry Vardon was sent to Bournemouth for his health, and they took good care to see that his clubs did not go with him, and solemnly warned him that he must not play there, for he might have been equal to borrowing somebody else's clubs. Then he would write to London in a most pathetic manner, saying, "They won't let me have my clubs and play," as if he were being deprived of food and the necessities of life.

There are some exceptions to this rule of continual play that may be taken as proving it. There is the case of Andrew Kirkaldy, who, after being second for the Open Championship in 1879, went for to be a soldier, was sent to Egypt, fought at Tel-el-Kebir and other places, came back in 1886, and soon afterwards tied for the Open Championship. Mr. Edward Blackwell had two separate spells of farming in California, each lasting about five years, during which

periods he never saw a golf club or ball, but each time he came home he regained his best form almost immediately, and captured Royal and Ancient Club medals. But, after all, in golf every man must be to a large extent a law unto himself; and the fact that he is so is one of the glories of the game.

VIII

It is a glorious thing to play a game that one need never give up, however long one may live. And what is more, the game can be played well by the veteran, and he enjoys it almost as much as ever, and does not merely take part in it for the sake of the fresh air and the exercise. Possibly if he had not been a golfer in his middle age, and perhaps in his youth as well, he would not be able to play any game, even a fireside game, by the time he was due to become an octogenarian. For some years previously his pleasures would have been with the angels. One cannot discover who is the oldest golfer, but there are many still active on the links who are nearing ninety, including a celebrated peer-patron of the game. Considering the matter from the other point of view, we have the remarkable fact that nearly every professional golfer of note in these days (and a large though decreasing proportion of amateurs) began to play golf of some sort as soon as his baby intelligence had developed sufficiently to make him understand that if he hit a ball with a stick it would move. They began to play as soon as they could walk, and almost to a man they declare that the very first memories they have of anything in life

are associated with playing some kind of childish golf, and aping their elders in every possible way.

It is to the fact of their having done so that they attribute most of their success in their after life at the game. As children they developed a free, easy, natural swing that has stood them in good stead ever since, and it has become so rooted into their system that they are far less liable than other golfers who began much later, to be constantly going off their game and dropping out of their proper swing. Harry Vardon, James Braid, J. H. Taylor, Alexander Herd, Willie Park, Jack White, and all the rest of them played golf as the very smallest children. The two last-named both declare that they developed their extraordinary putting faculties when they were mere babies. Park, a king of putters, it is certain, gained his extraordinary delicacy of touch, and fine discrimination in selecting the line to the hole, through practising as a very small boy with marbles on the stone or brick floor of his father's workshop at Musselburgh, a slight hollow in the floor being regarded as the hole. He got a passion for such putting practice, and at nights would surreptitiously borrow the key to the shop and hie there with some other boys for putting practice. He says that he has never had such hard putting to do since, and that when in due course he went out on the links to play the real game, putting seemed very easy to him. The first clubs that Alexander Herd ever used were glued together for him by his mother, and his first golf was obtained in the streets of St. Andrews. It was much the same with several of the best amateurs, though from the evidence that one can obtain they do not appear to have been such keen golfers when babies as

were the professionals. Mr. Hilton, one of the most skilful amateurs of any time, thinks he was about six when he first went forth to try to play with a full set of his father's clubs.

Then, practising all through their childhood and youth, at what age did these men first begin to play first-class golf, and to give signs of their future greatness? From an analysis I have made of their own statements, and the events of their careers, I find that in nearly every case it was at about seventeen—just when their stature and physical powers had fairly fully developed. In practically all cases men who were subsequent champions were good scratch players at this age. But you will always find that it takes them many more years after this to make their game perfect—many years of the hardest and most persistent practice conceivable. Mr. Hilton came on very quickly, being in championship form when he was twenty-two, and Taylor had fully matured by the time he was twenty-three. But Harry Vardon was twenty-six, and Braid was thirty-one. Generally a man who is destined to play the great golf, and who has been at it all his life, does not begin to settle down to the steady brilliant game until he has passed twenty-five, and from that point he usually improves a little until he is thirty, at which he is at his very best. Thirty is the golden age for golf. Look back through history, and see how formidable have been the great men at that age. The fact may be useful evidence against those who sneer about the "old man's game," as showing how long it takes to attain perfect golf when everything is in your favour. Mr. Barry's victory in the amateur event when he was nineteen, and those of Mr. Travis and Mr. Hutchings when these gentle-

men were quite middle-aged (anyhow, Mr. Travis, the younger, was forty-three), have to be regarded simply as phenomena, and as the exceptions which prove the rule. The tale of the ages, as gathered from all experience, seems to be that the ideal golfer begins as a baby, is scratch at seventeen, a champion at twenty-five or twenty-six, and perhaps again at thirty-two, and that thenceforth he plays serenely on until at eighty-five or thereabouts he engages in a great foursome with other old warriors. And, taking it all round, a very good time he has had.

IX

In the dampest and gloomiest days of the British winter, the golfer's fancy often flies to Riviera and Egyptian courses; and a while later the golfer follows his fancy, so that he may have a dry game in the sunshine again. Golf in Egypt is a thing to itself. "Through the green" it is mere sandy desert, for bunkers there are chiefly mud walls, and the putting "greens," which vary a little on the different courses, are generally made of rolled mud. Yet this golf is eagerly participated in and most thoroughly enjoyed by the large British population. They would not be without it for a thousand Pyramids. They have their competitions and they have a championship of their own. Egyptian golf has a curious history. It is nineteen years since the game was first played in the Land of Pyramids—that is to say, since two players drove from a tee and holed out on what they called a "green"; but some time before that a ball was hit by a golfer. The circumstances are remarkable and

are worthy of the baptism of an ancient country like Egypt to a Royal and Ancient game. Rameses II. and Cleopatra would have approved.

This is the true story. A full-blooded Scottish golfer, imbued with all the best traditions, and all the better for being a clergyman, none other than the well-known Rev. J. H. Tait of Aberlady, went for a holiday to Egypt, and duly climbed to the top of the Great Pyramid. Arrived there he rested, and to do so the more effectually he put his hands into his pockets, when, curiously enough, he felt a golf ball in one of them. In a moment the golfer was ablaze in the parson, and he determined that right there on the summit of the Great Pyramid of Cheops he would play the game for the first time in Egypt. So he teed up the ball and addressed it most elaborately and conscientiously with his umbrella, for, of course, he had no clubs with him. There were none in Egypt. Then he made a bonny St. Andrews swing: the ball went spinning away through the fine desert atmosphere and was never seen again—by the man who hit it, at all events. There were some great jokes about this shot afterwards. They said that in future days some old antiquary would find this ball in the desert sand, and would try to make out the hieroglyphics (the name of the maker, Tom Morris) upon it. As they would then be indistinct it would be suggested that they stood for Moses, and the inference would be that the lawgiver of Israel was a golfer.

Some years after that a course was laid out near Cairo. The men who made that course and played the first golf were none other than Mr. J. E. Laidlay, twice Amateur Champion, and Sir Edgar Vincent, who won the Parliamentary handicap in 1905. This was

in 1888, and Sir Edgar had only had one taste of golf previously, that being in the previous summer, but he thought it would be as well to take his clubs with him to Egypt. Mr. Laidlay, going to Egypt also, thought the same thing; but when they got there they found there was no golf at all. They did not know each other; but Sir Edgar knew Mr. Laidlay by reputation, sought him out, and they conferred together on the miserable character of the situation. Mr. Laidlay was famishing for some golf, and stirred up a great enthusiasm in the other, so they agreed that they would go out into the desert together and make a course.

"We made a survey of the outskirts," said Sir Edgar, "and found the material to be of the most unpromising description—seven parts sand and one part scrub everywhere. There was one comforting fact, and that was that our bunkers were ready made, for there were bunkers everywhere. Mr. Laidlay's enthusiasm overcame everything, and by dint of hard labour and perseverance we soon had a nine-hole course laid out. In this way we were certainly the pioneers of golf in Egypt, and, as I believe, in Africa." When Mr. Laidlay went home again he entered for the Amateur Championship and won it for the first time. One of the first converts to golf in Egypt was Lord Cromer.

There are now nine clubs and courses in Egypt. At Cairo the round usually consists of twelve holes, although there are two more which are very seldom played. It is desert golf, and the "greens" are brown patches of puddled earth, over which sand is sprinkled daily to true them up and slow them down a bit. Some say that the golf at Helouan is the best in Egypt,

and others prefer the Assouan course, in the making of which Mr. John Low had much say and which he has visited since. Here the greens are made of rolled Nile mud. But most prefer the Mena House course, which is laid out on a bit of the very small area of grass there is in Egypt, which is so precious that players are requested to play only in rubber-soled shoes for fear of breaking it. For part of each year the course is under water. Not only is there grass here, but the course is laid out alongside the Great Pyramid, the shadow of which is thrown across it. This Great Pyramid—2,000,000 cubic feet of stone—gives golfers a queer feeling if they catch sight of it when swinging for their drive. When Napoleon was beginning the battle of the Pyramids hereabouts, he said to his men, "Soldiers! from the summit of yonder Pyramid forty ages behold you." That is so, and the golfers may wish they did not. They may think it is no game for spectators of this kind.

X

Many golfers, like others who are not golfers, have come to the conclusion that in the twentieth century it were better for them and their game to think and grow thin. One of the most enthusiastic and determined says that success in the game depends chiefly on the stomach, and one is half inclined to think that he is right. He is, to this extent, that it is hard to play fine golf when the interior mechanism is in bad working order. And it is quite apparent that we modern golfers, like other people who are outside the pale of our noble game, are not the possessors of such

strong heads and tough digestive apparatus as our ancestors of the links used to be. The man in the street dare not for his life walk into the Cock Tavern and call the "plump head waiter" to bring him a pint of port just because it is five o'clock, as Tennyson used to do as regularly and deliberately when he was Fleet Street way, as if it were nothing more fortifying than tea that he demanded. The modern man would be too much afraid, lest perchance he should not know when it was six o'clock. We are not like our forefathers, and we can never be like them. There is a queer tale of a comparatively modern golfer who drank deeply overnight, so that his path to his bedchamber was one of tortuous difficulty, but who, nevertheless, got up in the morning to win a championship; and it is not many years since a picture was drawn for a text-book on golf in which it was suggested that "the man to back" was he who was sitting down to something in the nature of a Porter-house steak with a not very small bottle of wine at the side of his plate.

From a high moral point of view those ancestors of ours who bred inferior stomachs for us were, of course, wrong, and yet they did many fine things on their pints of port. They wrote great prose and verse, they painted fine pictures, their taste and skill in handicrafts were superb, they won the battle of Waterloo and the battle of Trafalgar, and they could—most undoubtedly they could—play golf. Having regard to the quality of their tools and the state of the upkeep of their links, they made many fine rounds, which showed that they had great skill, that they had a fine steadiness of hand and eye, and even that they upon occasion went in for thinking golf!

And of all the types of the modern Britishers' ancestors, give us for great courage at the board and for a capacity for high enjoyment according to his lights, the golfing ancestor! He was a rare fellow. He went out to play his round by day, and he foregathered the same evening with the others of his golfing society and celebrated the day as many persons say that a good day should be celebrated. And it was a matter of duty with him too, not merely inclination. On the morning of the play and dinner days of some of the fine old Scottish golfing societies, it was the custom to send the boy of the club round to each member's house summoning him to the meeting, and taking his name if he promised to be present at the evening meal.

The old golfers saw to it that the quality of all the fine things of which they partook was of the very best, for leading features of their dinners were the gifts of various members of their own company, and it was the common custom before each gathering was ended to make large provision for the next one in the way of promises of food and drink, and these promises once made were exacted to the last ounce and drop, under penalty of fines of dozens and cases of wines and spirits.

No club has richer traditions in this respect than the old North Berwick. The viands that its own company sent to its table for its constant meetings were fine things. One time Mr. Hay of Rockville sent along a round of beef stewed in hock. Sir D. Kinloch sent Shetland beef, the Duke of Buccleuch contributed large quantities of venison and venison pasty, while the Earl of Eglinton, as an apology for his absence from one meeting when captain, sent

a fine buck. As for liquids, Sir David Blair presented the club at the start with three dozens of champagne, and thereafter it became the custom to fine a member exactly that for any delinquency or omission on his part. Thus we have a minute on the books for 23rd September 1835, which reads: "At dinner it was voted unanimously, on the motion of the captain, that Mr. John Sligo be fined in a case of three dozen champagne for not sending a cook as proposed by himself, by which means the turtle, venison, and other delicacies were entirely destroyed." Judging by the temper of these old North Berwickers, and of the importance that they attached to these things prandial, one would have been inclined to congratulate Mr. Sligo on the leniency with which his grave offence was treated. Whisky by the dozen and half-dozen came from Campbell of Glen-saddell and Macdonald of Clanranald, shrub from Mr. Whyte-Melville, rum from Major Pringle, casks of beer and porter from various other members, and so on; claret, withal, which was presented in large quantities, being the favourite drink.

Even if one be but a drinker of tea and ginger ale, there is some interest in reading of the exploits of the old-time golfers of Edinburgh and Musselburgh. In the "bett book" of the Honourable Company, under date of 4th January 1766, there is the rule entered: "Each person who lays a Bett in the Company of the Golfers, and shall fail to play it on the day appointed, shall forfeit to the Company a pint of wine for each guinea, unless he give a sufficient excuse to their satisfaction"; and a most interesting entry in the minutes of 16th November 1776 tells us that "this day Lieutenant James Dalrymple, of the 43rd Regiment,

being convicted of playing five different times at Golf without his uniform, was fined only in Six Pints, having confessed the heinousness of his crime." To this minute, signed by the captain, there is appended a codicil, stating, "at his own request he was fined of Three Pints more." Always pints, and never pounds or guineas. The Company even thought that it was a proper thing for it to pass a formal resolution adopting certain liquors as the club drink, just in the same way as they would adopt a uniform. Thus, on 11th December 1779, the sentiment of Christmas being already abroad, it was resolved and duly entered on the minutes, that "Port and Punch shall be the ordinary Drink of the Society, unless upon these days when the Silver Club and Cups are played for. At those meetings Claret or any other Liquor more agreeable will be permitted."

O, say some, for the days of famous Jamie Balfour, secretary and treasurer of the Company in 1793! Never was jollier golfer. And never a man more honest, more deservedly popular, and loved by all his contemporaries than he, as witness the fact that when, alas! he went to the links of Valhalla before he reached the age of sixty, the company mourned for him as golfers had never mourned before. They met at a special meeting and dinner in the most solemn mourning, with the Captain in the chair and Sir James Stirling, Baronet, Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh, beside him, and drank to Balfour's memory in the most solemn of toasts.

Jamie looked upon the wine when it was red; he could see no virtue in self-denial. He liked the sound of the drawn cork. When he heard one drawn in any house that he happened to be in, which gave an

unusually sharp report, he would call out, "Lassie, gie me a glass o' that!" not troubling to ask what the wine was, but taking it for granted that for such a report it must needs be good of its class.

A story is told that a lady who lived in Parliament Close, Edinburgh, was wakened from her sleep one summer morning by a noise as of singing, when, going to the window to learn what was the matter, guess her surprise at seeing Jamie Balfour and some of his boon companions, evidently fresh from an orgie, singing "The King shall enjoy his own again" on their knees around King Charles's statue. It used to be said that Balfour could run when he could not stand still, and the story is told that on one occasion, going home late from a festive night, he happened to tumble into the pit formed for the foundation of a house in St. James's Square. A gentleman passing heard his wailing, and, going up to the spot, was entreated by Balfour to help him out. "What would be the use helping you out when you could not stand though you were out?" said the passer-by. Whereupon Jamie retorted, "Very true, perhaps, yet if you help me up I'll run you to the Tron Kirk for a bottle of claret." And he did; and having won the first bottle, Jamie exclaimed, "Well, 'nother race to Fortune's for another bottle of claret," and he won that one also.

In its ancient days the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews was great on fines in wine. It promoted conviviality on every possible occasion, and, indeed, one of the first of its minutes that are now discoverable says, under date 4th May 1766, "We, the Noblemen and Gentlemen subscribing, did this day agree to meet once every fortnight, by Eleven

of the clock, at the Golf House, and to play a round of the links ; to dine together at Bailie Glass', and to pay each a shilling for his dinner—the absent as well as the present." It was some two or three years after this that means were devised for augmenting the dinner wine through the various social delinquencies of members. Thus, on 4th September 1779, a resolution is passed as follows: "It is enacted that whoever shall be Captain of the Golf, and does not attend all the meetings to be appointed throughout the year, shall pay Two Pints of Claret for each meeting he shall be absent at, to be drunk at such meeting ; but this regulation is not to take place if the Captain be not in Fife at the time." Many years later, in 1818, the wine tax on absentees was applied to members generally, under interesting circumstances, as indicated in the terms of the resolution that was passed, which read: "The Club, taking into consideration that the meetings have of late been thinly attended by the Members residing in town, in consequence of several members giving parties on the ordinary days of meeting, and thereby preventing those who would otherwise give their presence at the Club, from attending them, Do Resolve, that in future such Members as shall invite any of their friends, Members of this Club, to dinner on the days of meeting, shall forfeit to the Club a Magnum of Claret for himself, and one bottle for each Member so detained by them, for each offence, and the Captain and Council appoint this Resolution to be immediately communicated to General Campbell." On 16th September 1825 a minute is entered, "Which day the present Captain, having imposed on himself a fine of a Magnum of Claret for failure in public

duty, imposed a similar fine on the old Captains present." It is quite evident that in these rich old days the social side of golf was cultivated in a manner that makes the worthiest efforts in this direction in the twentieth century look mean in comparison.

The men of the old Musselburgh Club were great in conviviality. Here is a remarkable entry taken from their minute-book: "Musselburgh, 11th January 1793.—The Club met according to adjournment. The meeting was so merry that it was agreed that matching and every other business should be delayed till next month."

On 11th May 1798, when the Club held its meeting, the question was put as to whether the funds should be disposed of by the members present or delayed till the December meeting, when it was resolved by a majority that the company then present should determine it. Thereupon it was put to the vote as to whether the funds should be drunk, or part of them taken to "give their Myte to the Voluntary Subscription in aid of the Government," and it was carried unanimously that Five Guineas should be sent to this fund in the name of the Club, and that the remainder of the funds should be disposed of at the December meeting. Meeting at Moir's on 16th February 1810, the members "Resolve, That an annual subscription of One Guinea be paid by each member, from which fund the expense of the dinners is to be in future defrayed, but all the expenses of liquors to be defrayed by the company present. And any overplus at the end of each season to be sunk in a General *Gaudeamus*."

The old records of the Bruntsfield Links Golf Club

are similarly entertaining. On 27th April 1822, "Captain Kilgour informed the meeting that Mr. Williamson had sent a small cask of spirits of his own manufacture as a present to the Club. The Secretary was ordered to transmit the thanks of the Society to Mr. Williamson, and to inform him that he was unanimously elected an Honorary Member." On 29th June 1842 we are told that "a very large party dined at Cork's, and the evening was spent with more than stereotyped happiness, harmony, and hilarity. A number of matches were made. Mr. S. Aitken (not, of course, when madness ruled the hour) pledged himself if, and when, Deacon Scott married, to present to the Club half a dozen of wine, and the like quantity to the object (lovely, of course) of his choice! This happy evening 'through many a bout of linked sweetness long drawn out,' partook of the transitory nature of all earthly things, and, as one of our poets says, broke up!"

After the meeting of the Bruntsfield members on 17th December 1842, "A large party dined at Goodman's, and spent a very happy evening, not the less so that some member, to the company unknown, made the handsome present of half a dozen of Champagne. Mr. Brown, after some very apposite remarks, read an interesting paragraph from the *Bombay Times* of the 19th October last, noticing certain proceedings of a Golf Club formed in the East Indies, which gave rise to much felicitous discussion, and the appointment of a deputation, consisting of the Captain and Mr. Paterson, to meet and compete with the like, or any number of the Indian Club, the deputation to travel at the Club's expense and by the new Aerial Transit, which is expected to start

early in February next." They were in a happy mood that evening.

The minutes record that on 18th October 1845, "The Club dined in the Musselburgh Arms Inn, and spent a very happy evening; but the meeting having been prolonged beyond the period at which the omnibus (in which seats had been taken) started, the members found it necessary to walk the greater part of the way to town."

Rich, indeed, were those ancient days of golf!

XI

And so, heigho! another full year of golf has run to its end, and we come to pause for a little while to reflect upon the new chapter that has been added to the long happy story of our play; for, indeed, it is true of us golfers, as it is of others, that "we spend our years as a tale that is told." For some days now the links which have served us so faithfully and so well during all this year, have been at rest, asleep. Nature, the gentle considerate nurse, sometimes comes to the help of these precious acres of green turf in that season when their lot is the least happy, fending away us tyrant masters while she lays them to repose and wraps up each teeing ground and putting green and all the way between in the thick mantle that she weaves herself. Perhaps the players do not always know that the grass welcomes this snow, and is not, as they might imagine, stifled with it and reduced to such unconsciousness as to be near the point of death. The snow both nourishes and warms the worn-out

turf—collects and holds down for its sustenance all the available nitrogen in the atmosphere, and then covers it with that thick cloak which generates only warmth beneath. Presently, when the frosts cease and the snow melts and the grass lies bare again, those who have recollection enough for the comparison will see that it is greener and stronger than it was before. When there is a championship in prospect on St. Andrews links, the wise and good greenkeeper there beseeches kind Nature that of her infinite variety she will vouchsafe to his little patch of earth for some several days of winter a heavy fall of snow, that in due course he may better serve up to his master golfers a links of such perfection of order as will please them to the utmost. What shall he care if the old grey place is beleaguered by these storms of snow, if the Swilcan Burn is almost covered up, and if it would be as much as the life of the captain of the Royal and Ancient Club were worth to try to find the line to the Long Hole? Hush, you grumbling golfers! The old course, weary, is at rest; and patiently will the happy greenkeeper wait for its awakening. There is something of pathos in the time and the scene, as:

“Full knee-deep lies the winter snow,
And the winter winds are wearily sighing;
Toll ye the church-bell sad and slow,
And tread softly and speak low,
For the old year lies a-dying.”

How much does it mean to us, does a year of golf! In the last few moments of the year that you give up to golfing thought and reverie as you sit by the cheerful fire, and perhaps, according to the old fancy, toy on the hearthrug for a while with the putter that

you hold at convenience in the corner, and the memento ball that you preserve upon the mantelpiece—at such time make a pleasant reflection upon all the joy and the gladness, and the health and the adventure, and the glorious rivalry and close comradeship that have been crowded into this short space of time! Above all, think how much nearer in most blessed friendship has this year of golf drawn you to those who are most after your own heart! There is no habit of man that can do more than golf towards such an end as this, and it is in his abundance of the best friends that a man lives most happily and to the best purpose.

And the golfer has seen more of the year, of the real year of Nature so complex and so complete in its variety and balance, than the other men who live in towns. He braved it in the open lands through the bitter weeks of January and February, and he was cheerful through the winds and rains that followed, for as the rainbows spread across the sky he knew that the glorious spring had come, most heartening time of all the golfing year. Then would he stamp his feet on turf grown firm, and acclaim his ball with affection for its constant cleanliness. The golfer, even he of the town, hears the change in the song of the birds, he notices the newcomers among them; he has interest in the leafing of the trees, and lo! the big sun of summer shines upon him. And when can golfer be happier than when, after droning lazily through a hot afternoon, he plays an evening round upon the links in those most perfect conditions for pure delight? Surely it is hard to say which of those

rounds is the best, that of the spring morning, the autumn morning, or the one in the balmy evening of June. And the golfer, bold and lucky, who once in a way makes his ripest play on some wild day in December when the wind from the sea comes like a blast across the links and all above is dripping scud, would in his pride not grant that the golfer lived his life at the full on any of those other days of peace and calm. So, from the play in the long summer twilight, we wander down the year, through brown October to the greys that follow, and the white curtain falls at last upon the exhausted season.



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